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The Story of the Covenant

Fifty Years of Fighting Faith



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COVENANTERS' FLAG CARRIED AT BOTHWELL BRIG

The Story of the Covenant

Fifty Years of Fighting Faith

By

T. Ratcliffe Barnett, Ph.D.

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TO
ALL FAITHFUL SCOTS IN WHOSE VEINS
FLOWS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT
OR IN WHOSE SOULS THERE IS AN
ABIDING LOVE OF THE KIRK

PREFACE

THE writing of this book has been a labour of love.

No claim is made for originality in the telling of the tale, or for newness of material. But, to me, the *Story of the Covenant* will always be one of the most moving chapters in the history of the Church in Scotland.

Although there are no reference notes, I have tried to verify every fact stated, and I must be content with expressing my great indebtedness to all who have written on the Covenanting Period before me.

If some ask why the story has been retold, I can only answer that every generation needs to be reminded of what we owe to our faithful forebears; for the lives of great men who have done noble deeds will always inspire us to serve God better in our own day and generation.

T. RATCLIFFE BARNETT.

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THE PROLOGUE

FIFTY years of fighting faith ! In that short phrase you have the whole story of the Covenanters told.

This battle of conscience began in 1638 with the signing of the National Covenant in Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh, and it only ended with the Revolution in 1688. The men who struggled for freedom of faith in Scotland and won it, between these two dates, will for ever be known in history as The Covenanters.

In this matter of religion, the Scots have always been a nation of fighting men and women. Indeed, so much have we struggled in the past for different aspects of the Truth, that the story of our ecclesiastical divisions is both the puzzle and despair of other nations.

But it is the glory of our land that its toughest battles have always been battles of faith. The Scots Kirk for centuries has been the pulse of our national life. The History of Scotland is the

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History of the Kirk. At no time has an assault been made with impunity on the conscience of Scotsmen. Again and again, the men who have been in political power for the time being have erred grievously when they have tampered with the prerogative of true men and women to believe and think what their consciences have prompted them to believe and think. Every time that has been done there has been a religious war in our land. For the average Scot is not a servile creature.

It is by no mere chance that the national emblem of this rugged, somewhat dour, but conscience-loving people is a Thistle. Stubborn emblem of strength ; flourishing on the bleak uplands where nothing else will grow ; beautiful when you see it in its summer bloom ; springing up again whenever you cut it down ; not easily grasped unless you know how to handle it ; with a fierce exterior and a soft heart beneath all its outward prickles—a Scots thistle or a Scotsman—there is not much difference between the one and the other.

In this new age of change and wonder, as indeed in every age, the new generation is in great danger of forgetting the history of those

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men and women, long since dead, who by their sacrifices bought for us freedom and strength. The leaders of to-day were the children of yesterday, and the children of to-day will be the leaders of to-morrow. Our best judgments in the present are built on what happened long ago. So, while we would be foolish in this twentieth century to use ancient weapons of warfare or to cling to the controversial opinions of our forebears, still, it puts strength into our souls to recall the men and women who counted life as nothing in comparison to the Truth of God as they knew it.

We live in a time when the whole tendency is towards reconciliation. Why, then, should we recall a controversial chapter of the past? Because this pleasing tolerance which we now enjoy was only made possible for us by those who long ago fought for that which is the natural heritage of every man—freedom to think and worship God as he pleases. We cannot understand the story of to-day unless we know the history of yesterday. Whatever is, in this present, has already been. What is to be exists now. And God is ever bringing back to us what is past.

What exactly then was it that made the

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Covenanters fight for fifty years against their own King and Councillors ?

It was just this—that the later Stuart kings, who were for the most part rash and weak, had provoked many of their most loyal subjects who had the real interests of the country at heart. The Scots, as a people, had an almost superstitious faith in the Stuart kings. But, latterly, those kings alienated their best supporters by a long course of oppression and arrogance.

For example. At this very time Charles I. maintained the old mischievous doctrine of the Divine Right of a king to be the soul and centre of the government of a country, himself alone being answerable to God for what he did, without any reference to the will of the people. A king who thus believed in his own Divine Right was a regal pope. He claimed the implicit obedience of every subject. The very conscience of the nation was in his keeping.

Being, moreover, a papist at heart and a bishop's man, Charles was naturally determined to stamp out Protestantism in the country. His favourite motto was that of his father—"No bishop, no king." So, to gain his own ends, he gathered round him, in the Scots Parliament,

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men who thought as he thought, without troubling themselves overmuch about the right or wrong of political or religious affairs, until the Scots Parliament gradually became the mere echo of the king's court, or the instrument of some dominant faction of the barons.

But the religious genius of the great majority of the Scots people was for the Presbyterian form of Protestantism. The result was quite inevitable. Kirk and people ranged themselves against King and Parliament. None but a wrong-headed and stupid king would have struck his people so sorely on their most vital part. None but a king with a woefully bad memory would have forgotten the tragedy of his own grandmother—Mary of Scots, the beautiful and misguided girl with the Frenchified soul, who came over the water and was broken like a reed in her attempt to drive Scotland into Popery.

So the King's Parliament was once more ranged against the Kirk which had ever been the People's Parliament. It was especially so then. For the Kirk in those days took the place of the Parliament, the Press, and the Public Meeting. When, therefore, the Kirk of Scotland rose, it was really the people of Scotland who rose.

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And yet, they were not mere revolutionaries. All the master spirits of the Church—Knox, Melville, Henderson, Rutherford—were marked adherents of the Constitutional Government. But these men were still more marked adherents of Conscience. They were fighting for spiritual freedom. They demanded a limited monarchy. They wished the people's will to be represented in the government of the country. They refused to be beaten into any acceptance of obnoxious doctrines. So they directed all their energies to do battle against the Romish supremacy of the King and his Councillors.

Living in a very different age of freedom to-day, we may look back on the Covenanters and think that they made many mistakes. They did things which we would not now do. With them, politics were too often mixed up with religion. On occasion their zeal ran away with them, and they even tried to coerce others as they themselves refused to be coerced. But—it is one of the unpardonable sins of historical criticism to judge any people apart from the circumstances and development of their own particular time. The supreme matter for us to-day is to think ourselves back into the standpoint and circumstance of the

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Covenant, and ask, " Could any people abide to be robbed of their prerogative of thought, freedom and judgment, in matters of religious faith, without losing all respect for themselves and all favour of God who has especially endowed men with a passion for these very things ? "

So the Covenanters arose. The men who refused to be put upon. The rugged souls who would bow to no king at the price of a broken conscience. They were not men of one class only, but men of all classes and characters, as we shall see. Nobles, barons, lairds, burghers, farmers and common folks. They were faithful witnesses for the very principles on which our life is built up to-day. Often imperfect in their methods, and sometimes unfortunate in their followers, they were nevertheless national heroes who were morally admirable. Above all, they were patriots. In life and in death they were animated by the noblest zeal to make the Scots people a free, brave, religious nation.

Let us now turn from a cold historical statement of the case to the poet's view, which often makes the truth clearer than a whole regiment of well-assorted facts. So long as the blood of the Covenanters flows in Scots veins, Robert Wanlock

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Reid's words will express the deep emotion of every loyal son of the Kirk who seeks out the countless Covenanters' graves which stand on the heather hills, or in the quiet kirkyards of south-west Scotland to-day.

BURY ME IN KIRKBRIDE

Bury me in Kirkbride,
Where the Lord's redeemed anes lie.
The auld kirkyard on the green hillside,
Under the open sky—
Under the open sky,
On the breist o' the brae sae steep,
And side by side wi' the banes that lie
Streiked there in their hinmost sleep.
This puir dunc body maun sune be dust,
But it thrills wi' a stound o' pride,
To ken it will mix wi' the great and just
That are buried in thee—Kirkbride.

Wheesht ! Did the saft wind speak ?
Or a yammerin' nicht-bird cry ?
Did I dream that a warm hand touched my cheek,
And a winsome face gaed by ?—
And a winsome face gaed by ?
Wi' a fa-aft licht in its een—
A licht that bude come frae the dazzlin' sky,
For it spak' o' the sternies' sheen.
Age may be donnert and dazed and blin',
But I'll warrant, whate'er betide,
A true heart there made tryst wi' my ain,
And the tryst word was—Kirkbride !

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Hark ! Frae the far hill-taps,
And laigh frae the lanesome glen,
A sweet psalm tune like a late dew draps
 Its wild notes doon the wind ;—
 Its wild notes doon the wind,
Wi' a kent soun' ower my mind,
For we sang 't on the muir—a wheen hunted men,
Wi' our lives in our hand lang syne ;
But, naething on earth can disturb this sang,
 Were it Clavers in a' his pride,
For it's raised by the Lord's ain ransomed thrang
 Foregathered abune Kirkbride.

I hear May Moril's tongue
 That I wistna to hear again,
And there 'twas the Black Macmichael's sang
 Clear in the closin' strain—
 Clear in the closin' strain,
Frae his big heart bauld and true ;
It stirs my soul as in days bygane,
When his gude braidsword he drew :
I needs must be aff to the moors ance mair,
For he'll miss me by his side ;
In the thrang o' the battle I aye was there,
And sae maun it be in Kirkbride.

Rax me my staff and plaid,
 That in readiness I may be,
And dinna forget that the *Book* be laid
 Open across my knee—
 Open across my knee,
And a text close by my thoom ;
And tell me true, for I scarce can see
That the words are “ Lo I come ! ”

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Then carry me through at the Cample Ford,
And up the lang hillside ;
And I'll wait for the comin' o' God the Lord
In a neuk o' the auld Kirkbride.

ROBERT WANLOCK REID.

CHAPTER I

A RIOT IN THE KIRK OF ST. GILES, EDINBURGH

It was a fair summer morning in July 1637, the 23rd of the month, and a Sabbath day. That day will ever be known in Scots history as The Stony Sabbath, and a whole volume could be written about the Riot which took place in the Cathedral Kirk of St. Giles, Edinburgh.

The warm winds that blew down the Royal Mile, from the Castle to Holyrood, were electric with a coming storm, for the new Liturgy of Laud, the King's Archbishop, was to be read by Royal command in the kirks of Scotland for the first time. The douce citizens of Edinburgh had much need to be early astir. Had not the ministers of the city agreed to begin their services between eight and nine o'clock in the morning? At that time there were no seats in the churches, and it was a common custom to send serving-maids early to the kirk with their creepie

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stools to keep good places until their mistresses arrived.

The service in the old Cathedral was to be conducted by Dr David Lindsay, the Bishop of Edinburgh—Doctor Resolutus, as he was by-named—a former minister of Dundee, and a thorough-going believer in the Divine Right of kings. His colleague was James Hannay, once of Kilmaurs, but now the Dean of Edinburgh. They were to read their prayers after the usual early morning service was over. The citizens of Edinburgh had been stiff Presbyterians since the days of Knox, and if Edinburgh could endure the new Liturgy, there would be little fear for the rest of the country.

Not that a Liturgy was a new thing. The Reformed Kirk in Scotland had always used a Service Book. Indeed, at this very time, Knox's *Book of Common Order* was in use. What, then, was the objection to Laud's Liturgy? That it was a Popish Liturgy; that it came from England to supplant the book of John Knox, with the blessing of Laud who was an Englishman; and that it was being imposed by the king upon his Scots subjects against their will. King James VI. had wished to do the same thing; but he knew

A RIOT IN EDINBURGH

the temper of the Scots people better than did his son, Charles I. So James was afraid to supplant Knox's Service Book. Charles had no such scruples. He took the risk. For in Laud he had a bad adviser.

The Scots Protestants of 1637 were no ways different from the English Catholics of 1549 in this matter of resenting a Prayer Book imposed on them. For on Whitsunday of that year, the first Prayer Book of Edward VI—a counterblast against the “idolatrous rite” of the Mass—was ordered to be read in all the churches. Wherever the Old Religion was adhered to, the people rose in protest and resented the innovation. The Mass, which was so bitterly abhorred by the New Protestants, was deeply adored by the Old Catholics. The result was that at Tavistock, where the country folks had been reared under the shadow of an abbey, a general insurrection took place, and Lord Russel, the new owner of the monastic lands who had been sent down by the King to restore order, never got nearer home than Honiton—fifty miles away. The Protestants had to fly from their homes, and they all took refuge in Plymouth.

All this goes to prove that whichever side a

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king may take in a religious controversy—be he a Protestant Edward or a Catholic Charles—it is always dangerous for him to impose a Liturgy on his subjects against their will.

See the good folks streaming into the High Kirk of St Giles—nobles in their grand attire, Councillors bewigged, burghers in all their seriousness, and common folks from the high lands. Some of the fine ladies were carrying their own folding stools, but most of them took over creepies from their serving-maids who had secured good places hours before. The kirk was packed. Everybody was excited. Yonder in the king's throne sat Spottiswoode, the Primate and Chancellor. Yonder, too, in a gallery, sat Provost Aitkenhead, with his rosy face. In a corner sat David Calderwood, the historian, taking notes. It was plain to all that something by ordinary was about to happen.

Already, the old-fashioned service from the *Book of Common Order* had been read. The metrical psalms had been sung. The reader, Patrick Henderson, was finishing the lesson at the lectern on which rested the great Bible.

Two citizens were whispering together.

“Mind ye the scene,” said the one, “just four

A RIOT IN EDINBURGH

years ago, when Master Patrick was draggit frae the latron by Bishop Maxwell to mak' room for twa white-shirted priests ? ”

But, before his neighbour could answer, Patrick Henderson had closed the Bible and was bidding farewell to the worshippers in these doleful words :

“ Adieu, good people, for I think this is the last time of my reading prayers in this place.”

A murmur of dissent ran through the vast assembly as the reader left the desk. It was now on the stroke of ten. A wave of excitement overswept the worshippers, as an angry gust often stirs the trees of a wood just before a storm bursts. Dean Hannay was now making for the desk, with a brown leather folio in his hand. So innocent a thing may a leather-bound book appear !

But, the sight of that book angered the whole congregation. A wild tumult arose. Women began to weep. Men shouted. Serving-maids clapped their hands. The Dean had begun to read Laud's Liturgy. His voice, however, was soon drowned in the uproar, and the Bishop was seen waddling up the pulpit steps to quell the riot.

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It was too late.

“Traitors ! Belly-gods ! Deceivers ! A pope ! ”

These were some of the ugly words thrown at him.

Tradition tells us that a certain serving-maid, called Jenny Geddes, hurled her folding stool straight at the head of the Dean, crying out at the same time,

“Wha dare say mass in my lug ? ”

To this very day in St Giles’s there is a brass plate on a ledge, near the Chapel in the Moray Aisle, bearing this inscription : *Constant tradition affirms that near this spot a brave Scotswoman, Janet Geddes, on the 23rd July 1637, struck the first blow in the great struggle for the freedom of Conscience which, after a conflict of half a century, ended in the establishment of civil and religious liberty.*

This inscription was written by Lord President John Inglis, the greatest man in Scotland, as Robert Louis Stevenson calls him in one of his letters. But no manuscript gives an account of Janet Geddes having thrown the stool. A Mrs Mean is mentioned by Wodrow. Tradition, however, knows nothing of pen and ink, and in the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of

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Scotland in Edinburgh there is a folding stool which is still called the Stool of Jenny Geddes.

Some definite foundation for the story of the stool is found in the Diary of Johnston of Warriston, who actually mentions "stool-casting" on "that blak doolful Sunday."

So some stool must have fallen with a clatter on the steps that July morning, having mercifully missed its mark, as a woman's throw often does. A shower of creepies doubtless followed. The riot had commenced. A rush was made for the pulpit, and the indignant Bishop was hauled down from his perch with scant ceremony.

Above the wild hubbub the voice of Archbishop Spottiswoode was heard thundering out an order. The magistrates, with their halberdiers, swept the angry crowd into the street. The Stony Sabbath had begun. Cobbles were torn from the High Street. The cathedral door was battered in. Crash and splinter went the glass, as the windows of St Giles were riddled with stones. In the half-empty kirk the Bishop and the Dean finished the hateful office in fear of their lives, their voices being almost drowned by the noise of the angry crowd outside, while stone

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after stone fell ominously on the paving flags at their feet.

When the service was over, the Bishop made his way down the High Street, passing through an infuriated crowd that had nothing but curses to throw at him. Doctor Resolutus had need of all his courage. Had not the servants of the Earl of Wemyss been sent out to rescue him, he would have been torn to pieces as a public sacrifice.

Johnston of Warriston once more gives us some realistic idea of the uproar when he says : " The bishcep both after the foranoones sermon was almost trampled underfoot, and afternoone being coatched with Rosbrugh was almost stoned to dead ; the dean was forced to caige himselth in the steeple ; Mr James Fairly to leave of reading at al ; Mr Hery Rollok not to beginne ; and Mr David Fletcher to stay til the people went out."

If this Stony Sabbath in Edinburgh witnessed the first riot, others were to follow. In the other city churches, when the Liturgy of Laud was introduced, disturbances took place. Only in one Edinburgh kirk—the College Chapel (Trinity College Church) was there no fracas, for there the

A RIOT IN EDINBURGH

introduction of the book was delayed by Rollock, the preacher, as Johnston of Warriston indicates.

At Glasgow, a month later, when the Diocesan Synod met in St. Mungo's Cathedral to introduce the Liturgy, the devouter sex made a great din at the door. The preacher, William Annan, was attacked by the women, who smote him with their fists, tore his cloak, ruined his ruff-hat, and left him on the street in a sorry mess. Next day, the town guards escorted him on his horse to the city boundary, with a crowd following. But his pony threw him into the mud, so that when he departed for Ayr, the crowd jeered at the bespattered liturgist, who was doubtless greatly relieved to be rid of their rough-handed attentions. In Edinburgh, the day after the Riot on Stony Sabbath, six or seven brawling women were locked up in the Tolbooth; but in Glasgow a month after, the popular feeling was aroused, because only two were dragged to Bridewell. For we learn from a contemporary chronicler that in Glasgow people of the best quality took part in the protest.

Thus Scotland seethed with anger at the insult which the King and the Bishops had hurled in the face of her conscience. The Presbyterians

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were roused to the necessity of asserting their rights in some definite fashion, as their fathers had done before them. So they began to organize an opposition by entering into one Solemn Covenant after another.

CHAPTER II

THE FAIR PARCHMENT

FROM every part of the kingdom petitions began to pour in upon the Privy Council. Each protested against the innovations which were being introduced. Crowds flocked to Edinburgh, the capital of Scotland, to support these petitions. But no reformation can ever be accomplished through rioting or brawls alone. Calm thought, careful organization, and self-controlled leadership are all essential.

So, for the purpose of representing the reasoned will of the people, a special number of deputies were appointed to consider the petitions that were coming in. The Privy Council approved of this step, and the nobles, gentlemen, ministers and burghers, who formed the people's deputies, met in that historic building—the Parliament Hall.

A historical name often springs from a trifling

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circumstance. These deputies happened to sit round four green tables while they were contracting their business. The nobles sat at one, the county gentlemen at a second, the ministers at a third, and the burghers at a fourth. This four-fold committee became known as The Tables.

Needless to say, the King looked with great disfavour on The Tables. This People's Parliament struck at his own power. He even forbade them to meet. But it was too late. The Scots were indignant, and they were in earnest. So, at all risks of displeasing the king, The Tables sat on.

When a national crisis arises, leaders of the people are always thrown up by emergency. Among the first notables of this People's Committee were Rothes, Montrose, Lindsay and Loudoun. But at this stage there were two men who arose and became the chief means of drawing up a document which expressed the people's faith—Alexander Henderson, the minister of Leuchars in Fife ; and Sir Archibald Johnston of Warriston, one of the ablest lawyers in the land. Each had the mind of a statesman. Between them they drew up a document which expressed the people's

THE FAIR PARCHMENT

will. That document, which will for ever be famous in the religious history of Scotland, was called The National Covenant.

This Magna Charta of Scots religious liberty consisted of three parts. The first part was a reproduction of an older Covenant of 1581, called the King's Confession, which asserted that the Pope's "worldlie monarchie, and wicked hierarchie" was abhorred and detested; the second part, which consisted of a detailed list of Acts of Parliament condemning Popery and confirming Presbyterianism, was naturally the work of Sir Archibald Johnston of Warriston, the lawyer of the Covenant; and the third part, which was a solemn protest against those innovations of worship that had caused the nation to revolt, was the work of the Rev. Alexander Henderson, the parish minister of Leuchars.

These two men had been requested by the Four Tables to draw up a Covenant which would be satisfactory to the suppliants. They finished the draft after an all-night sitting on 27th February 1638, and this was revised by Rothes, Loudoun, and Balmerino. This, in turn, was revised once more by the suppliants—the barons, ministers and burghers—and there were many emendations

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before the National Covenant was finally passed for signature.

Johnston of Warriston was only twenty-seven years of age when he acted as clerk to the Tables, and drew up the first two sections of the Covenant. He was a deeply religious man, with a serene mind and a mystical spirit. He was full of mental energy, and it was on his subtle suggestion that the King's Confession of 1581 was renewed, in order to confront Charles with his father's policy of anti-Popish protests. If Johnston of Warriston was just beginning life when he took the field, Alexander Henderson, on the other hand, was a late developer, for he was already in his fifty-fifth year (*b.* 1583), when Providence called him from the quiet of his country manse at Leuchars to fight the battle of a people's faith.

The scene in Greyfriars Kirk and Kirkyard must surely have been one of the most moving in Scots history. It was a winter day, the 28th of February 1638, when the people of Scotland crowded into Edinburgh. Here, surely, was a true democracy—the Strength of the People, as the word means, not only one class, but all classes, from nobles to common folk.

The place of assembling was the Greyfriars

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Kirk. It stood in the "Yairds" which Queen Mary had granted to the citizens of Edinburgh for a new burial-ground when the old graveyard of St Giles became overcrowded. After the Reformation, the reformers had built a plain Presbyterian kirk, a little distance above the site of the old monastic church. It is an old kirk to-day, but it was a new kirk then. The principal entrance to-day is from Greyfriars Place at the head of the Candlemaker Row; but in 1638 there was not even a gate at that portion of the churchyard, the entrance then being by the steps at the foot of the Candlemaker Row. There the crowds entered and thronged the slopes of the "Yairds" on their way up to the kirk.

Tradition tells us that the Covenant was signed both in the church and also on a tombstone in the churchyard. But there is nothing in the contemporary accounts to prove that the Covenant was signed anywhere that day but inside the church. It was Bishop Guthry of Dunkeld, whose Memoirs were published in 1702, who first set afloat the statement that "upon the 1st of March 1638, they being all assembled in the Greyfriars Church and churchyard, the Covenant, having been previously prepared beforehand, was

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publicly read and subscribed by them all with much joy and shouting.”

But two men who were present, the Earl of Rothes and Archibald Johnston of Warriston, have left a particular account of the day’s doings, and in neither of them is there any mention of the Covenant being signed outside in the churchyard.

Rothés in his *Relation* says : “ This (the Covenant) being drawn, was revised and corrected by divers learned ministers, and subscribed by many thousands of the nobilitie and gentrie at the Greyfriar Kirk, on Wednisday, the last of February ; and by many hundreths of ministers on Thursday, the first of Marche, and by many of the burrowes ” “ Being mett and prayer said by Mr. Alexander Hendersone, verrie powerfullie and pertinentlie to the purpose of renueing the Covenant, Loudoun spoke. . . . Efter the reading of the draught by Mr Archibald Johnestone, out of a fair parchment above an elne in squair, these who had any doubts were desyred by Rothés, if they wer in the South and West Countrey to go to the west end of the Kirk, where Loudon and Mr David Dick wold attend them ; if they were of the Lothians and the North side of the Forth, to go the east end of the Kirk,

THE FAIR PARCHMENT

where he (Roths) and Mr Alexander Hendersone sould attend them for giving satisfaction to them. Few came, and those few proponed a few doubts which wer resolved. The noblemen came thither at four hours and subscriv'd. The barrons subscriv'd efter them, so many as could subscribe that night, whill it was neir eight." He then goes on to say that the signing by the ministers went on the next day in the 'Taylors' Hall in the Cowgate.

The other eyewitness who wrote on the subject was Sir Archibald Johnston of Warriston himself in his *Diary*: " Upon Wedensday, 28 Februar, that glorious marriage of the Kingdome with God. I was at foranoone with the Commissioners of the barrons. . . . The noblemen having appointed the body of gentrie to meit at tuo hours in the Grayfrear Kirk to hear bot copyes of it (the Covenant) read, and to aunsuear objections. I propous and resolves to have the principal ready in parchment in al hazards, that in cais of approbation, it might presently be subscriv'd. I mett al the gentlemen in one troupe going up the cassie to the Kirk. I resolved to read and did read the parchment itselth publikly, quhilk, after som feu doubts of som, was approvin;

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and after ane divine prayer most fit for the tyme and present purpose, maid by Mr Alexander Henderson, the Covenant was subscriyved, first be the noblemen and barrons al that night til 8 at night. On Foorsday morning I had wryting in the night four principal copyes in parchment ; at nyn hours it was subscriyved be al the ministerie: and at tuo hours be the barrons. On Frayday in the College Kirk (Trinity College Church) . . . thou (Warriston) read it publikly before the people of Edinburgh quho presently fell to the subscriyving of it al that day and morrou.”

To all who would debate the matter of the signing of the Covenant these are the classic documents, and they help us to-day to see the picture which all Edinburgh must have looked upon that winter day of February 1638.

How pleasant can be the prospect from Greyfriars Kirk on a cold, sunny February morning. But two hundred and ninety years ago, the green slope fell away to the Grassmarket, where a gibbet stood on the rising ground at the east end of the open space. That spot was yet to become the Scots Calvary for some of those very Covenanters and their children. Beyond all rose the Castle Rock, with the grim citadel on its brow.

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Early in the morning the people began to arrive at the entrance to the Greyfriars “Yairds,” entering by the steps from the foot of the Candle-maker Row. How vividly Johnston’s words make us see that procession slowly climbing up the cobbled path to the kirk :

“I mett al the gentlemen in one troupe going up the cassie to the Kirk.”

Nobles, barons, lairds, ministers, burghers and common folks—they were all ascending their own Zion Hill to sign the Covenant.

At two in the afternoon came Rothes, Loudoun, Henderson, Dickson, with Johnston carrying the “fair parchment above an elne in squair.” This document was so beautifully inscribed and lettered that it was called “The Constellation on the back of Aries.” It was all so simple, and yet so momentous—that service in the kirk. Alexander Henderson prayed, the Earl of Loudoun explained the righteous cause of the Covenanters, and Johnston of Warriston read the parchment.

Then, after a solemn silence, Rothes asked if there were any objectors. One or two expressed their difficulties, but these were soon dispelled by explanation.

One of the doubters was Robert Baillie, whose

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“ Letters and Journals ” throw such light on the Covenanting scenes. His scrupulous mind was satisfied, however, and it is diverting to read his “ Journal ” of that day which shows us the subtle element of egotism which often mingles itself with the scrupulosity of an objector :

“ After reasoning it was yielded to me.” . . . “ They required bot my disallowance of the corruption of the Bishops’ Government ; whereunto I yielded.” . . . “ So in thir two poynts of my fears Loudon, by his wisdome and equity gave me contentment. This courtesie was due to me : both because they hoped what would content my scrupulous minde might be appearance satisfie others.” . . . But in the end Baillie was completely at rest in his mind, for in another place he writes : “ Upon thir two grounds I got my hand to that write . . . and did never repent of that subscription ”.

Then the congregation approved of the Covenant with uplifted hands. The signing went on by the nobles and barons within the church, continuing till nearly eight o’clock at night. Some signed their names and added “ until death.” Others drew their own blood and used it in place of ink. Indeed, the copy of the

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Covenant possessed by the Edinburgh Corporation to-day shows the signatures of both men and women, and some are quite apparently written in blood.

Who had signed the Covenant? Men like Montrose, Rothes, Loudoun, and Cassillis ; and other nobles, barons and Commissioners of Shires ; with Alexander Henderson and Johnston of Warriston leading the brave Covenanting ministers and common folk.

Of all the men that day, Alexander Henderson of Leuchars was among the most conspicuous. A sedate, and modest-looking parish minister, with a look of mild determination on his somewhat anxious face ; a furrowed forehead crowned with a mass of black hair ; a calm firm-set mouth which was almost hidden by his close-cropped moustache and beard ; a white ruff about his neck, goffered to the nicest degree—throw a black gown about him, showing a glimpse of a coloured cassock below, and you can almost see this late developer and tranquil minister of Christ.

But the work of the signing of the Covenant had only begun. It was a people's Charter. Many duplicate copies were written and sent all

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over Scotland. The country people, in those Reformation days, were very largely dependent for all their news and guidance upon the local noblemen or lairds who alone were accustomed to travel much. So nobles and country gentlemen conveyed the Covenant from district to district. Ministers commended it from their pulpits. In a very short time it was subscribed by almost the whole kingdom, with the exception of some of the great episcopal centres, like Aberdeen, Inverness, St Andrews, and Crail. John Livingstone, a noted minister, rode all the way to London in disguise with a copy of the Covenant, that the loyal Scots who resided there might not be forgotten.

And what of Spottiswoode, the Primate who had behaved so haughtily in St Giles? He was shut up in his Edinburgh lodging, waiting for a safe convoy across the Border. Surely this sentence which he wrote in his hidie-hole is eloquent of the whole Covenanting movement: "All which we have been attempting to build up during the last thirty years is now at once thrown down."

Even in London, as Archbishop Laud was going to a Council meeting, Archie Armstrong,

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the King's Scots jester, met him and said, " My lord, wha' is fule noo ? "

But poor Archie paid for his jest. The Archbishop must have complained. For the Court clown was dismissed.

Thus the National Covenant was the answer which Scotland gave to the patronage of Whitehall and Canterbury.

CHAPTER III

A COVENANTING CRUSADE

ALTHOUGH the Covenanters had kept strictly within the letter of the law, the signing of the National Covenant was nevertheless a direct defiance of King Charles. He now felt that his crown and reputation were at stake. His courtiers, who knew little or nothing about the temper of the Scots people, assured him that a little show of force would soon quell the rebellion.

But what of the people of Scotland themselves?

A great revival of religion followed the signing of the Covenant. Within six weeks of its acceptance the whole nation had been canvassed, and both assenters and dissenters were tabulated. The Tables sat daily, and their transactions were by no means formal. Edinburgh was full of Commissioners, and it was very evident that a storm was brewing. For the coming of that storm the Tables made determined preparations.



REV. ALEXANDER HENDERSON OF EDINBURGH

A COVENANTING CRUSADE

They set up a deliberate organization, with clerks, messengers, and even spies, for collecting information and gathering voluntary contributions. The "Minute Book kept by the War Committee of the Covenanters in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright" gives us many examples of how vigorously these dues were collected, both from enthusiasts and from laggards. They sent to Poland for arms. They kept themselves informed about the movements of the Government. Two ship-loads of arms were already on the way from the Continent. Moreover, The Tables framed articles condemning the innovations, and asked the King to call an Assembly and a Parliament to deal with the whole situation. The Bishops naturally prepared a counterblast, and complained of the suppression of their own church by the now more powerful Presbyterians.

The King's answer was to appoint the Marquis of Hamilton as Royal Commissioner to Scotland. He could hardly have done worse. Hamilton was of Royal Stuart blood, and was a possible heir to the throne. But despite the fact that he was the premier nobleman of Scotland, his whole character belied that description. A young man of thirty-two years of age, he had just returned

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from serving under the great Gustavus Adolphus on the Continent and had risen to the rank of a general. A poor Scot was this bankrupt nobleman. In a letter to the King he actually admitted that next to hell he hated Scotland ; that his sons would be bred in England ; and that no daughter of his would be allowed to marry a Scotsman. Was it wonderful that when this renegade Scot arrived at Leith on his journey north from Berwick, he should be met by a crowd of twenty thousand people who were anxious to see this proxy of their King ! An ominous number of swords glinted in the sun. At Greenside, on the slopes of the Calton Hill, he saw five hundred ministers robed in black, with William Livingstone, the minister of Lanark, who was ready to address him in no uncertain manner. At every market cross in the country a stout Covenanter stood prepared to protest, if the King's Proclamation to "give some stop to their mad-nesses" should be foisted on the people. Thus, it was not a handful of rebels Charles had to deal with, but a whole nation outraged. In Hamilton's earlier letters he refers to the leaders of the Covenanters as "Combiners"—the name "Covenanters" was only coming into use.

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The Covenanters then began to prepare for an Assembly of the whole Church. The place fixed upon was the Cathedral of St Mungo in Glasgow. The date, the 21st of November 1638. Despite the King's efforts to prevent it, the Great Glasgow Assembly was called.

The Covenanters had sent a letter to each presbytery clerk, asking for the election of three ministers and one elder from the presbytery with the addition of another from the burgh. Doubtless care was taken that no one with Episcopal leanings was chosen. But, if the Covenanters captured the seats, they did so with the consent of the ministers of Scotland and the burghs as well. Thus every member of this Assembly was properly elected.

There was, moreover, great interest in the approaching gathering, for the Assembly had not met for twenty years. Glasgow was then a poor little town of about twelve thousand inhabitants. Its only title to fame was the great Cathedral of St Mungo, round which it had grown. The cathedral and the college were the two most illustrious buildings in the modest city by the Molendinar Burn.

Every hostelry and lodging was engaged by

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The Tables for the members of Assembly. The northern Covenanters were to meet in Edinburgh and march in a body to Glasgow. At this point in the story we cannot help admiring the organization of the nation and the whole staging of the Drama of the Covenant. Whatever followed afterwards, the Covenanters in November 1638 were commanded by masterly leaders. For example, each elected Commissioner was allowed to take four or more attendants with him—every burgh could send two, four, or six men to support the Commissioner—and congregations were asked to pay the expenses of the poorer ministers. Nothing at this stage seemed to be left to chance.

The result of this well-organised appeal which The Tables made to the people of Scotland was—that there appeared at Glasgow one hundred and forty ministers, two professors, ninety-eight ruling elders, of whom seventeen were noblemen, nine were knights, twenty-five were landed proprietors, and forty-seven were burgesses with their armed body-guards. These, with their attendant advisers, swelled the vast crowd, which must have looked like a regular religious Crusade.

The King was mischievously informed by

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Hamilton that "the crue assembled" was "the most part totallie voyd of learning." But a glance at the list of members reveals the fact that there was not one uneducated person on the roll. For earls, there were Home, Lothian, Cassillis, Eglintoun, Rothes, Montrose, Wemyss; for barons, there were Cranstoun, Hay of Yester, Balmerino, Johnstoun, Loudoun, Sinclair, Lindsay, Cowper; for knights, there were Ker of Cavers, Hume of Wedderburn, Hepburn of Waughton, Murray of Touchadam, William Baillie, Gilbert Ramsay, John MacKenzie, Stirling of Keir. Principal John Adamson, twelve provosts and ex-provosts of the chief towns, besides bailies, town-clerks and lairds, added to these men of title made a goodly show for a crew which, for the most part, according to Hamilton's report, was totally devoid of learning.

It has been said so often that the Covenanters were a body of poor, plain, outed folk. But the above catalogue of names proves for ever, that in 1638 the cream of Scots character from every rank was to be found in the ranks of the Covenanting Crusade.

A true estimate of the culture of the Great Glasgow Assembly was given by Professor

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Masson, when he wrote these words in his *Life of Milton*: “The first properly historical Covenanters” were “simply the whole flower and strength of the Scottish nation from the highest peerage to the lowest peasantry.”

CHAPTER IV

THE GREAT GLASGOW ASSEMBLY

It is now easy to picture the scene on that winter day—the 21st of November 1638. The City of the West is full. Ministers in black, soldiers in uniform, great nobles, country lairds, and common folks crowd along the narrow High Street. All are making for the Cathedral of St Mungo which stands at the head of the town by the side of the Molendinar Burn. The Privy Council are all there. Three bishops—Ross, Brechin and Glasgow—watch the assembling of the Court from the Bishops' Palace, close by the Cathedral. The wintry sun glinted on many a sword and pistolet. Had not Hamilton reported that these men all came “ boddin in feare of war ” ?

The churchyard was like a fair. Inside the great cathedral there was a dense crowd. Scabbards rattled on the stone flags of the dim nave. High up in the clerestory ladies peered down on

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the Great Assembly seated in the choir, and whispered comments to each other upon many a well-kenned face. The transepts, like the nave, were packed with onlookers. The city halberdiers found it hard to keep the crowd in hand, while the smoking candles flickered fitfully and lit the immensity of the kirk with a weird and feeble glow.

One man sat somewhere in that throng congregation—Mr Robert Baillie, the minister of Kilwinning—an inveterate note-taker and letter-writer, whom Carlyle in his own blunt way describes as “this headlong, warm-hearted, blundering, babbling, ‘sagacious jolterhead’ of a Baillie! For there is real worth in him, spite of its strange guise—something of the Boswell” . . . “he took this trouble, and ungrateful posterity reaps the fruit.” Baillie wrote long gossiping letters to William Spang, his cousin, who was Scots minister at Campvere in Holland, to his wife, to the Moderator, to earls and commoners, to this man and that. Notwithstanding his “hasty babblements,” no man who tries to piece together the story of the Covenant to-day can afford to overlook the Letters of Robert Baillie.

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“For myself,” he wrote from Glasgow to William Spang, “I resolved no to be a medler in anything : I was well lodged : I had brought in a trunk full of my best books and papers : I resolved to read and write and study so hardlie as I could all incident questions.”

And so he did. For, although his trunk of papers lay in his good lodging off the High Street, yet somewhere in the gloomy cathedral Robert Baillie sat with paper and his “killoveyne pen” or blacklead pencil in his hand. And we are glad of it.

The one man on whom the Assembly had set its heart was Alexander Henderson of Leuchars. Here, surely, was a solemn setting for the modest minister from Fife ! In spite of all protests from the High Commissioner, who sat in the chair of state surrounded by the Privy Council, Alexander Henderson was chosen Moderator. Immediately after that, Sir Archibald Johnston of Warriston was chosen Clerk. If Baillie had never written more than these two sentences, we would be for ever grateful to him—for of Alexander Henderson he says : “He was incomparablie the ablest man of us all for all things”—and of Johnston of Warriston he says :

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“Mr Johnstoun to us all, was a nonsuch for a clerk.”

Of the many nobles present, there was one who came to this Assembly for the first time on the Covenanting side—Argyll. It was currently reported that he had been won over, the night before the Assembly met, by Alexander Henderson's persuasive arguments. He was, as everyone knew, the most powerful subject in the kingdom. Argyll and Montrose in the same Assembly! Did they look into each other's eyes, and wonder? Alas, the time was yet to come when this same Argyll, who desired always to be on the side of the big battalions and on the bieldy side of danger, was to look into the eyes of Montrose, the beau-ideal of a Scots soldier, when he was being trundled up the Canongate of Edinburgh to his execution. And then, ten years after that, Argyll's turn came.

The Marquis of Hamilton, from the first, had an inkling that he was no match for the sagacious minister of Leuchars with his pensive face, on which was stamped a tranquil determination. Henderson spoke with a whole nation behind him. There was only one question in every mind, “Who is to be the Head of the

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Kirk in Scotland — Jesus Christ or King Charles I ? ”

So the days of debate went on. This vital question of the Headship of Christ came up in one form or another, again and again. It was easy to see how the wind sat. So, just one week after the opening of the Assembly, the Marquis of Hamilton stood up and raised objection to the whole convention—first, because The Tables had packed the Assembly ; second, because the Assembly had no right to pass judgment on the Bishops ; and third, because the lay-members or elders had been improperly elected and had no spiritual authority. He thereupon requested the Moderator to close the meeting with prayer. He was told that this was impossible. He then replied that, if the Presbyterians in that vast gathering continued to act as they were doing, he would himself dissolve the Assembly in the name of the King.

“ I make a declaration,” said he, “ that nothing done here in this Assembly shall be of any force to bind any of His Majesty’s subjects : and I, in His Majesty’s name, discharge this court to sit any longer.”

Having made this speech, the Marquis sat

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down. Electricity was in the air. The Moderator rose to speak in a tense silence. How much was to depend on the instant word of this man !

“ Then, sir,” said Alexander Henderson in a quiet but resolute voice, “ if you must leave, we have no choice but to sit on and do our duty.”

The Marquis rose, and passed down the nave followed by the whole Privy Council—except Argyll. A few members followed him. Swords and spurs clanked on the paved floor, and when his Highness came to the cathedral door he found it locked. Amid the babble of angry voices the stout oaken door was burst open, and the King’s Representative passed out.

But, in the choir, Johnston of Warriston, at the request of Rothes, was calmly reading a protestation in the name of Jesus Christ, the only King and Head of the Church, against the Commissioner’s action.

The very next day Hamilton issued an order to the effect that every person who was not a resident in the city was to leave the place within twenty-four hours. This was a final attempt to dissolve the Covenanters. But the Assembly sat on for other three weeks and transacted business which was to prove most vital to the Kirk.



SIR ARCHIBALD JOHNSTON OF WARRISTON

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The victory in this duel between the conscience of a nation and the commands of a King rested with Alexander Henderson. Under his guidance the Assembly, before it rose, had wrecked the whole ecclesiastical structure which King Charles and his father had imposed on the people of Scotland against their will. Between the 29th of November and the 20th of December it passed seventy-two Acts. The Acts of previous Assemblies establishing Episcopacy were annulled. The Court of High Commission, the Prayer Book, the Canons and the Articles of Perth were abolished. Eight of the Bishops were excommunicated, and the other six were either deposed or suspended. When the Act “declaring Episcopacy to have been abjured by the Confession of Faith, 1580-1, and to be removed out of this Kirk,” was passed, the only dissentient was Robert Baillie of Kilwinning—he of the trunkful of papers whom Carlyle calls “warm-hearted, canny, blundering, babbling Baillie.”

But the Bishops were not condemned hastily. A committee was appointed to investigate their case. The Moderator wisely instructed them to proceed, “accurately and orderlie, and that it may

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be upon some sure grounds, for our proceedings will be strichted (tested) to the uttermost." The list of personal misdemeanours which were proved against these men makes lurid reading. Sufficient for us to know that in Alexander Henderson's solemn peroration he ran over a catalogue of their crimes, thus : treachery to the Church, wasting of benefices, tyranny, simony, bringing in innovations, extravagance, drinking, filthy dancing, swearing, gambling, adultery, and " many other gross transgressions and slanders, at length expressed, and clearly proven in the process."

But it was a soldier—the Marquis of Montrose—who uttered the bitterest sentence against these men when he declared, " the very quintessence of Popery was publicly preached by Arminians, and the life of the Gospel stolen away by enforcing on the Kirk a dead Service Book, the brood of the bowels of the Whore of Babel."

Terrible words, and a dreadful doom declared on that December day in the dim cathedral ! But those Covenanters lived in terrible times, and had consciences of iron. They were as severe with themselves as with their enemies. For after the Doom of the Bishops was declared, they proceeded

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to purge the Church of scandalous and immoral ministers.

The Assembly decided to remove Alexander Henderson from his quiet parish of Leuchars to the High Church of Edinburgh. Reluctantly he bowed to the decision, and from that time onward he was the minister of the great Kirk of St Giles.

When the Glasgow Assembly was dissolved, Henderson is reported to have said :

“ We have now cast down the walls of Jericho: let him that rebuildeth them beware of the Curse of Hiel the Bethelite.”

All this was open defiance to the Royal authority, and could only mean war. The Scots were always loyal to the Stuart kings, but bitter discontent had been caused in Scotland by the King's ecclesiastical policy. To their King the Scots Covenanters had no objections. But, to the King's religion they were utterly opposed. When, therefore, a form of religion which was alien to the genius of the national soul was thrust upon the people, they rose in their strength and ranged themselves against the King who had altogether misread the temper of his loyal subjects.

It is an ill thing for any people to take up

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arms. In this matter the leaders of the Covenant consulted the great Reformers on the Continent. But these gave them no encouragement to haggle or bargain or temporize about the things of Christ. The indignation of the Scots people, as a whole, was thoroughly roused. Soon, by sheer stress of circumstances there was no doubt about taking the field. The Covenant had yet to be sealed with blood.

CHAPTER V

THE COVENANTERS GO TO LONDON

THE very next summer, Charles led an English army into Scotland. He was determined to force his will on his Scots subjects by the strength of arms. But he was too late. Already the Covenanters had organized their forces, and had appointed General Alexander Leslie—"the old, little crooked soldier"—to be their commander-in-chief. Leslie had been chosen, not only for his skill as a soldier, but to prevent any rivalry between the nobles. He had been trained under the great Gustavus Adolphus, and had returned to Scotland with the rank of Field-Marshal, after thirty years' campaigning abroad.

By the month of March 1639, deeds had taken the place of words. Leith was fortified, the Castle of Edinburgh was taken by Leslie, and those of Dumbarton, Douglas and Dalkeith were also in the hands of the Covenanters.

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On the 5th of June, Leslie sat down on Duns Law with an army of twenty thousand determined men, to await the coming of the King from Berwick, with a slightly larger force. But the English army was undisciplined and the southern soldiers were half-hearted about the whole dispute. For the first time the King realized what he was up against. So he preferred caution to the risk of battle. Neither side was keen for a fight. The Covenanters were unwilling to shed blood in fighting against their King. One day a Scots page in the service of the King appeared in Leslie's camp and, "as it were out of his own head," hinted that a conference might take place. Negotiations were immediately opened, and the result was the Treaty of Berwick.

The King granted practically all that the Covenanters demanded. He sanctioned Presbytery and thereby disallowed Episcopacy. He even went one step further than the Glasgow Assembly had gone, when he agreed to a suggestion that an Act should be passed which made subscription to the Covenant compulsory for the whole nation.

Here, indeed, was a capital error on the part of the Covenanters. They had all along been con-

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tending for freedom of Conscience, but now, without considering the consciences of those who differed from them, they claimed for themselves those very powers of spiritual compulsion which they had previously denied to the King, the Catholics, or the Episcopalians. No matter how we may revere the memory of those heroes of the Covenant who gave their lives for their faith, we only do an ill to our friends when we seek to condone their faults.

Charles was never more dangerous than when he was plausible. He had just ratified an Act of Assembly which enforced subscription to the Covenant on the whole nation ; but six days before the Assembly met, he wrote to Archbishop Spottiswoode in these words :

“ You may rest secure that, though perhaps we may give way for the present to that which be prejudicial to the Church and our Government, yet we shall not leave thinking in time how to remedy both.”

And so it fell out. A parliament followed, at which the Earl of Traquair took the place of the Marquis of Hamilton. This King, who never understood Scotland, was particularly ill-off for good advisers. When the Parliament met, the

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old controversies were thrashed out, but Traquair blocked all progress, refused to rescind those Acts which favoured Episcopacy, and dissolved the Parliament without its consent.

Here, surely, was a prime example of how Charles played fast and loose with the Covenanters, favouring them one moment and check-mating them the next. But, at the back of their minds, the Scots always doubted the King's sincerity.

The scene now shifts from Edinburgh to London.

Why, it may well be asked, were the Scots at this stage led into England? Because the Civil War in England between the King and the Parliament was being fought over the very same contention which gave rise to the Covenanting struggle in Scotland. It was for the cause of Freedom that Roundhead was fighting against Cavalier. The Parliamentary forces in England were defeated again and again. In their extremity they naturally appealed to Scotland for help. They sent Commissioners to the north, urging the Covenanting forces not to hold aloof from their strife in the south. They further proposed that "a strict union and league" should be formed

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between the Scots and the English Parliamentarians. The point of sympathy between them was the desire to abolish Popery and Prelacy in the land. Sir Harry Vane, Stephen Marshall and Philip Nye were among the Commissioners who represented the Commons.

So eight Commissioners were appointed by the General Assembly to further the Covenant in London. The eight were—Alexander Henderson, Robert Douglas, Samuel Rutherford, George Gillespie and Robert Baillie, ministers : with the Earl of Cassilis, Lord Maitland, and Johnston of Warriston, elders.

Alexander Henderson and Johnston of Warriston we already know. But what of the other six Commissioners ?

Robert Douglas was an Edinburgh minister, who had formerly served abroad in the army of Gustavus Adolphus. Of Douglas, that King once said, "There goes a man who, for wisdom and prudence, might be councillor to any prince in Europe." When Charles was executed, it was Douglas who preached at the Coronation of his son, Charles II.

Samuel Rutherford, the little fair man with star-like eyes, a keen intellect, an eloquent tongue,

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and restless hands, will always be best known as the country minister of Anwoth, where he poured out his emotional love in heavenly discourse.

George Gillespie, minister of the New Kirk in Edinburgh, shone at Westminster. This young man was a singular ornament of the Kirk. He preached to the Glasgow Assembly, and afterwards joined Leslie in his march to the Borders. "In my poor judgment," said Baillie, "there is not one who speaks more rationally and to the point than that brave youth."

Robert Baillie himself was one of them—the minister of Kilwinning, who afterwards became Principal of Glasgow University, and the reporter *par excellence* of the Covenant, without whose gossiping news letters we would never have been able to picture many of these historic scenes.

John Maitland, afterwards Duke of Lauderdale, was at this time a young noble of twenty-seven, with classical tastes and a certain leaning to theology. But he had a coarse face and a coarser soul. Who would have dreamed, as he sat in that great Assembly of Divines at Westminster, that he would yet become the torturer of his former friends? History to-day knows him as a persecutor of the faithful.

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John, sixth Earl of Cassillis, was a very different man. He was a courtly Kennedy from Ayrshire, with Lollard sympathies, a steadfast Covenanter, and a protestor against every illegal proposal of King and Council.

Johnston of Warriston completed the deputation. Douglas and Cassillis never took their seats.

The Assembly opened on 1st July 1643 in Westminster Abbey, the members of both Houses of Parliament attending, besides a large congregation. The members then adjourned to the Chapel of Henry VII. What a sombre colour scheme they must have made! Black coats, Geneva gowns and white bands, a sprinkling of canonical robes, broad ruffs, with the many-coloured costumes of a few nobles and commoners. When the cold weather came in December they met in the Jerusalem Chamber, part of the old Abbot's House which dates from the year 1376.

"Here no mortal man," wrote Robert Baillie, "may enter to see or hear let be to sitt, without ane order in wryte from both Houses of Parliament . . . we satt down in these places which since we have keeped. The like of that Assemblie I

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did never see, and, as we here say, the like was never in England, nor any where is shortlie lyke to be. They did sit in Henry the 7th's Chappell, in the place of the Convocation; but since the weather grew cold, they did go to Jerusalem Chamber, a fair roome in the Abbey of Westminster, about the bounds of the Colledge forehall, but wyder. . . . Foranent the table, upon the proloquutor's right hand, there are three or four rankes of formes. On the lowest, we five doe sit."

Westminster was full to overflowing. The Solemn League and Covenant was to be sworn and ratified. What a varied congregation—Parliament - men, Lords, Commons, Puritan Divines, and Scots Commissioners! Philip Nye addressed the vast audience. Alexander Henderson followed him with a stirring address. The parchment document was read from the pulpit, article by article. The whole audience stood, lifted up their hands, and swore the Covenant. Thereafter they signed it.

Henderson sent it home at once to Edinburgh. Robert Douglas, the Moderator, convened the Commissioners of the Church and State, and the Scots, after one day's deliberation, swore and

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signed the Covenant on the 13th of October in the New Church, Edinburgh, “with great joy and manie tears.”

The signing of the Solemn League and Covenant was fraught with so much vital consequence for the Covenanters in Scotland, that it is of the utmost importance to understand what exactly had been done.

In the Westminster Assembly there were one hundred and fifty-one members—of these one hundred and twenty-one were divines, ten were nobles, twenty were members of the House of Commons, and the quorum was forty. When, on 25th September, the Solemn League and Covenant was sworn, only one hundred and twelve members of the Commons signed it. This weighty document meant a great deal to England and Scotland—two nations which differed utterly in their ideas of religious government. Yet, after being drafted by Henderson and discussed in private by two small committees, it was read aloud in public for the first time within St Margaret’s Church and adopted there and then, without any chance being given to each individual member present of reading it and weighing it for himself. Immediately after that it was sent to

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Scotland and passed by the Estates in Edinburgh at a single sitting.

Why was this great Instrument so hurriedly agreed to by an English Assembly ?

The reason is very plain. England was at that moment divided into two camps. Civil war was raging. The English Parliamentary forces were in great need of military support. Very naturally, they wished to persuade the Scots to help them in their struggle against the King who was marching on London. But the Scots were pressing for a religious uniformity, while the English only meant to agree to a political compact.

“The English,” wrote Baillie, “were for a civil League, we for a religious Covenant.”

The Scots did not consider that the preference of the English people as a whole was for an Episcopal form of government. The English need at that moment was for military help : on the other hand, the Scots determination was for religious uniformity. So the English, to gain their immediate end, waived the point of uniformity, and the Solemn League and Covenant was signed.

And the result ? While the Covenanters were

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champions of spiritual freedom, there were many people who complained that their Scots representatives at Westminster had imposed a new bondage on their southern neighbours. Hence Milton's jibe :

“ New presbyter is old priest writ large.”

It must always be admitted that the grand aim of the Solemn League and Covenant was to link up the whole kingdom for Christ in one uniform religious system. But, although the Genevan creed had bred a race of stalwarts in Scotland, it did not follow that it would appeal to the vast majority of the English people. A creed to be acceptable must be voluntary, and must express the deep conviction of all who swear it. But—the English nation was not prepared to stand solidly behind the Solemn League and Covenant, as the Scots nation had stood behind their own National Covenant.

Here, then, was where the Scots Covenanters erred once more. They were so hungry for an ideal—the ideal of a uniform system of religion for the whole kingdom—that they were prepared to coerce their fellow countrymen. Their motive was noble, but their method was wrong. Henderson's dream was, to cure the irreligion of

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England, Ireland and Scotland by imposing a uniform Faith on Calvinistic lines. The one kind of religion which appealed to the Covenanters was Presbyterianism, although that was never actually stated in the Solemn League and Covenant.

But the English Independents did not believe in a graduated Presbyterian system of Church Courts, nor did they see any advantage in a parochial system. "The Independents," wrote Baillie, "being most able men and of great credit, feared no less than banishment from their native country if Presbyteries were erected," because, "as yet, a Presbyterie to this people is conceived to be a strange monster."

On the other hand, the English churchmen, as a whole, were for the Episcopal form of religion.

Needless to say, King Charles denounced the Solemn League and Covenant the very month after it was signed.

Even Cromwell, the great Independent, who had been brought up in the Church of England, had signed the Covenant. He had no quarrel either with Episcopalians or with Presbyterians. But his experience as a Puritan soldier had taught

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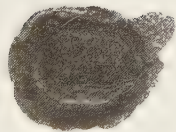
him that there must be toleration for men who served the State, whether they were Independents, Presbyterians, Baptists, or anything else. So, in September 1644, he raised the question in the Commons, and the "Accommodation" for tender consciences was passed. Moreover, Cromwell decreed that men were to be allowed to serve in the army without signing the Covenant. At this the Scots took alarm.

All this makes it clear, that the signing of the Solemn League and Covenant, despite its lofty aims and noble ideals, marked the beginning of a certain disintegration in the ranks of the Scots Covenanters. It is easy to-day to condemn them for want of tolerance and for lack of what we in modern times call accommodation of conscience. But they lived in days when a good man had to take his stand on one side or the other and to press his belief in anything to the uttermost. "In God's matters," wrote Samuel Rutherford in his Epistle to the Reader which prefaced his *Due Right of Presbyteries* (1644), "there be not as in grammar the positive and comparative degrees : there is not here truth and more truth and most truth. Truth is an indivisible line

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which hath no latitude and cannot admit of splitting.”

There you have some inkling of the spirit of those times—and especially the spirit of the Covenanters—a rigid and unbending opposition to all compromise with conscience.



Charles D.

SEAL AND SIGNATURE OF CHARLES [11]., PRINCE OF WALES, ON THE CARTE BLANCHE

CHAPTER VI

CHARLES THE SECOND AND HIS DRUNKEN PARLIAMENT

THE Scots having agreed to assist the Parliamentary forces in England in their struggle for freedom, a great victory was gained by Cromwell over the King at Marston Moor on the 2nd of July 1644. The Scots Presbyterians were present and did their best to seal the doom of Charles I. Within five years, the King lost his head. But how much happened in these five years !

This year of 1644—the year after the signing of the Solemn League and Covenant—was a very vital one for all. Marston Moor was fought in July. In August, Montrose went to Scotland, as a Royalist, and raised an army in the Highlands to fight for the King. At first he was one of the keenest of the Covenanters, and had signed the National Covenant, but he refused the Solemn

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League and then went over to the side of Charles. Montrose arrived in Scotland disguised as a groom, accompanied by two companions. Had he been recognized he would have been imprisoned, for he was known now by all to be plotting for Charles. For this, the Covenanters never forgave him. In November of this same year, Milton published his *Areopagitica* as a plea for the freedom of the press. By the end of the year the North of England was conquered by the Parliamentary forces, Cromwell resolved to reform his army, and the Independents rose to great influence.

During the next two years the struggle went on. Cromwell defeated the King at the Battle of Naseby in June 1645. Montrose gained a series of remarkable victories for Charles in Scotland—at Inverlochy in February, at Auldearn in May, at Kilsyth in August, only to be finally defeated at Philiphaugh in September. By May of the following year (1646) Charles surrendered to the Scots at Newark.

The Scots, who still had a hankering loyalty for their King, finding that they could not come to terms with Charles, handed him over to the Parliamentary forces in England. The English

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then tried to treat with the King, but found him impossible. Yet again in 1647, the loyal Scots tried to make a secret treaty with Charles—the bargain being that Charles was to establish Presbytery if the Scots would help him to gain the throne. A fine promiser but a poor fulfiller was Charles I.

By this time Cromwell had come to dislike the Scots with their strange combine of Presbyterian religion and loyalty to their Stuart King. With the end of the Second Civil War the army of the Parliamentary forces in England was now swayed entirely by the Independents, who resolved to put Charles to death. All members of Parliament who were favourable to the King were expelled, and the remnant of Parliament left—called the Rump—appointed a special High Court of Justice in 1649 to try Charles on the terrible charge of being “a tyrant, traitor, murderer, and a public and implacable enemy of the Commonwealth of England.”

This grim court was really a packed jury, for every member of it was against Charles. Needless to say, he was condemned to be beheaded. On the 30th of January the King passed out of one of the windows of the Palace at Whitehall to the

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scaffold. When all was over, the executioner held up the bloody head to the crowd and exclaimed, "Behold the head of a traitor!"

The Scots were horrified when they found that the Independents of England had slain their King. Monarchy to them was the natural form of government sanctioned by Heaven and consecrated by custom from time immemorial. They believed that Charles was the 107th in the line of Scottish kings. He was now the second member of the Royal House of Stuart to be put to death in public by the English. So, with an almost agonizing loyalty, the sympathy of the Scots swung over to the son of the slain king. This loyalty, as we shall see, was to cost the Covenanters dear in the years to come.

At this point, let us recall a very remarkable story which has to do with an old yellow document, on which there is no writing, but only one red waxen seal and one boyish signature—Charles P—— at the right-hand corner of the last page.

This double sheet of blank paper is called *The Carte Blanche*, and will be found in a large bound volume of Letters, written by kings of England and other historical persons, among the

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Harleian Manuscripts at the British Museum. The story of the *Carte Blanche* is as follows :

When Charles I. was executed, his son, the Prince of Wales, a lad of seventeen, was in Holland. He asked the Assembly of the States-General at The Hague to intercede with the Independents of England on his father's behalf. Two of the Dutchmen—Pauw and Joachimi—were appointed to act as ambassadors extraordinary to England, and they immediately set out with letters of credence. But they received no reply until 4th February, when all was over.

The young Prince, however, in his anxiety to save his father's life, did something else. He sought out one who, at that time, was in service in the Low Countries—Colonel John Cromwell, a first cousin to the great Oliver Cromwell, the Lord General of England. The Prince of Wales gave to this honest soldier a large double sheet of paper, with nothing written on it but his own name at the foot of the last page, with the red seal of the Prince of Wales opposite. Colonel Cromwell put it in his pocket, set out for England, and reached London on the eve of the day appointed for the execution.

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He went straight to Oliver Cromwell's house, but was refused admission. Drawing his sword, he pushed past the terrified servants and walked into Cromwell's room. After some altercation on the subject of the King's trial, Colonel Cromwell locked the door. Oliver started up in fear of assassination. But his cousin only drew forth the *Carte Blanche*, and held it out to the stern Lord General.

"Cousin Oliver," he said, "I bring to you this blank paper from the Prince of Wales. It is signed and sealed by his own hand. He wishes me to say, that above his signature you may insert whatever terms you please, conditions without reserve, a clause even making him forfeit all claim to his birthright in this kingdom. He will give up his crown. He will live as a private gentleman. He will stand by his signature and any conditions you may be pleased to place above it—if only you will save the life of the King, his father. You have the power, Cousin Oliver, to save your own family's honour by doing this deed of mercy. Otherwise this execution, which you yourself have inspired, will bring dishonour on your race for ever."

Oliver Cromwell stared at the blank sheet of

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paper which lay on the table before him. He took it up and examined the signature and the red seal opposite. Then he looked up.

“Give me the night to consider it. Return to your inn, but do not go to bed until you hear from me.”

John Cromwell withdrew. He waited at the inn, all dressed and booted. About one o'clock on the morning of that fateful day, the 30th of January 1649, a messenger arrived from the Lord General with this curt reply :

“The Council of Officers have been seeking the Lord in prayer, and it is resolved that the King must die. Colonel Cromwell may go to bed.”

Within an hour John Cromwell left London, and in the grey dawn, Charles I., King of England, was executed. This honest, bluff soldier, fearing a curse, changed his name, and was known ever afterwards as John Williams.

To see and finger that *Carte Blanche* is to come very near having contact with Charles II. and Oliver Cromwell, for both handled it. To look at the red seal and the signature of the seventeen-year-old Prince of Wales is to become conscious of the thought :

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“What might not this lad have become if his offer of self-sacrifice had been accepted?”

He is known now in history as one who was a merry and a dissolute monarch. But any possibilities of good in that royal son must have been embittered by the perpetual memory of that bloody head held up to all England, with the cry: “Behold the head of a traitor!”

News of the execution arrived in Scotland while Parliament was sitting. On Monday, 5th February, Chancellor Loudoun and the members of Parliament marched to the Cross of Edinburgh and proclaimed Charles II. King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland in protest against the “murder of the King.”

Two years later, on 1st January 1651, Charles II. was crowned by the Scots at Scone Palace. What a price the Covenanters paid for that crowning! Before being allowed to set foot on Scots soil at Speymouth, the young King had been compelled to sign both Covenants. It was two years since this prince had sent the pathetic *Carte Blanche* to Cromwell. He was now nineteen. But he was already set on crooked ways.

At the Crowning? Charles promised everything and meant to give nothing. While the

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Scots shook hands with him, they glanced at his sword. He was a Papist, and they were stout Presbyterians. The gay lad listened with his tongue in his cheek to the sermon of Robert Douglas. He swore and signed both Covenants again, and even appealed to his subjects "that if in any time coming they did hear or see him breaking that Covenant, they would tell him of it, and put him in mind of his oath." But false faith is ever obtrusive.

Montrose, that great soldier and Royalist, who had signed the National Covenant and bogled at the Solemn League, had been fighting battles loyally if brutally, up and down Scotland for his King. Now, he was publicly disowned although privately encouraged by Charles, who was making Scotland a mere stepping-stone to England. So Montrose was sacrificed and executed at Edinburgh on 21st May 1650. The wind changed, and Charles II. allowed Montrose's enemy, Argyll, to put the crown on his head at Scone the very next year. Ten years elapsed. Then the King had no more use for the great Campbell. So Argyll lost his head as well, with consent of the callous King.

Montrose and Argyll, the two nobles who had

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sat together in the Glasgow Assembly, who had served in turn the same King! Their heads adorned the same spike in Edinburgh, with only a decade between the executions! Here surely is a sorry story of a conscienceless king and of the Covenant outraged.

But politics and religion, the divine right of kings, and the spiritual freedom of faith were all hopelessly intermingled in those sad old days. Did not Cromwell himself, the great Puritan, ask the guidance of Heaven on an act of execution which he and his army had already agreed upon?

The great Protector died in 1658, and the Commonwealth came to an end. Back came Charles II. to England after a weary round of negotiations, and was crowned at Whitehall with all the fulsomeness of the Restoration.

The pendulum had swung once more. But Whitehall was not Scone. So, at last, Charles could afford to be deliberate, and he rapped out the pious dictum that Presbyterianism was not a fit religion for a gentleman.

Immediately after the Restoration, on 1st January 1661, the King dispensed with the Committee of Estates, which for nine years had been the only Parliament in Scotland. He called another Parlia-

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ment, which was made up of carefully selected Carolean gentlemen.

These king's men now made merry in the old Parliament Hall at Edinburgh—so merry, indeed, that this new legislature is still known in history as the Drunken Parliament. The Earl of Middleton was chosen as the King's Commissioner, the Earl of Glencairn became Chancellor, and Sir Archibald Primrose was appointed Clerk Register.

What did the members of the Drunken Parliament do ?

In six months they reversed the whole legislation of the nation. They made the King absolute. They demolished the Kirk and the Government. They voted £40,000 a year to Charles. They passed an oath of allegiance, annulled the Convention of Estates, declared the Solemn League and Covenant to be without any permanent obligation, and revoked all Parliamentary Acts between the years 1640 and 1648. Then, to add an emphasis of blood to all their drunken follies, they resolved to put to death the following protesting Covenanters—Samuel Rutherford, the Marquis of Argyll, James Guthrie and Archibald Johnston of Warriston.

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This was the beginning of the bloodiest chapter in the history of the Kirk in Scotland.

We cannot leave Charles II. without trying to draw his portrait.

He was, in his later years, a sallow-faced man with rather ugly features and a fine physique. He was fond of country sports, was a great walker, and could ride sixty miles a day. He would carry on a sparkling conversation with the utmost good humour, and adapt himself to all sorts, being gracious to one and vulgar to another as occasion required. He had that most fatal gift of all the Stuarts—a fascinating power of accommodation. There could be no doubt about his ability. He could take the measure of every place-hunter at the Court. Although not a scholarly man, he had enough interest in Science to found the Royal Society and set up Greenwich Observatory. Like many another profligate, he admired men who had the courage to reprimand him. Saintly Thomas Ken once rebuked the King for his gross conduct, and Charles immediately promoted him to be Bishop of Bath and Wells. He was above all things a merry monarch, with an easy temper, a mind governed by selfish-

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ness, lazy in everything but physical exercise, and a libertine with many mistresses.

Not that any man is wholly bad. For we can never forget the noble abnegation of the *Carte Blanche* ; or the constant love which he had for his child-sister, Henrietta of Orleans ; nor yet the remorseful letter which he sent to the son of the great Montrose—too late !

But Charles was a man without any real religion. He had no conscience. He was immoral to the core. He starved the navy to buy jewels for his mistresses, the Countess of Castlemaine, the Duchess of Portsmouth, and Nell Gwyn. He courted the Covenanters when it suited him, and then butchered them in cold blood.

Samuel Pepys tells us in a word the secret of the King's life, when he says, "He minded nothing but pleasure." John Evelyn also tells us how this royal libertine spent the last Sunday of his life. But pleasure is not happiness. Lust is not love. A man who was the compendium of all the vices could never be a good king.

"I can never forget," wrote Evelyn, "the inexpressible luxury and profaneness, gaming and all dissoluteness, and as it were, total forget-

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fulness of God—it being Sunday evening—which this day se’nnight I was witness of, the King sitting and toying with his concubines, Portsmouth, Cleveland, and Mazarine, etc., a French boy singing love-songs, in that glorious gallery, whilst about twenty of the great courtiers and other dissolute persons were at basset round a large table, a bank of at least £2000 in gold before them; upon which two gentlemen who were with me made reflections with astonishment. Six days after, was all in the dust.” . . . “Never had king more glorious opportunities to have made himself, his people, and all Europe happy, and prevented innumerable mischiefs, had not his too easy nature resigned him to be managed by crafty men, and some abandoned and profane wretches who corrupted his otherwise sufficient parts, disciplined as he had been by many afflictions during his banishment, which gave him much experience and knowledge of men and things; but those wicked creatures took him from off all application becoming so great a king.”

So wrote one of his contemporaries who knew him.

But there are two commentaries to be made on Charles II. This man, who himself lacked

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all real religion, did yet in the very name of religion send hundreds of our pious forebears in Scotland to their martyrdom. And this also. When we think of him as an exiled lad of seventeen sending the *Carte Blanche* to Cromwell, with great desire to save his father from execution, we must surely admit that, in those cruel days, the best of princes, or the worst, were the victims of desperate circumstances and pitiful friends.

CHAPTER VII

KING'S MEN THAT GAVE NO QUARTER

IN the year 1660, Charles II. seemed to do what he pleased with the Kirk in Scotland.

Before that, Scotland, especially lowland Scotland, had been essentially Presbyterian. Nobles and commoners, rich and poor, old and young had all joined in resisting the aggressions of royalty and the unruly nobles. A glance at the names of those who signed the National Petition of October 18, 1637—purchased for the nation in 1925 by Dr. W. B. Laikie—proves beyond doubt that all classes of Scotland were one in their adherence to the system of Presbytery in the Church of Scotland. This Petition was signed by five hundred noblemen, gentlemen, burgesses, and ministers. One name on it is of great interest—that of Thomas Dalrymple, an indweller in Edinburgh who came into possession of the estate of Binns in 1612. He was the father



GENERAL THOMAS DALZELI OF BINNS

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of the notorious General Thomas Dalryell of Binns, who was such a bitter persecutor of the Covenanters.

Why, then, was it possible for Charles II. to appoint the Drunken Parliament, and thus practically upset the whole legislation of Scotland?

One reason was, that the Church of the Covenant was no longer a unity. Divisions had crept in. Some were now Resolutioners, and others remained Protestors. The Protestor suspected the Resolutioner of being a man of too wide views and sympathies who might easily identify himself with the enemy—while, on the other hand, the Resolutioner looked upon the Protestor as a narrow stickler about points of mere religious precision. So a distemper crept into synods and presbyteries, kirk-sessions, and even the homes of the people.

The Covenanters, it must be confessed, had alienated many men of position and title. They now drew most of their adherents from the middle classes and the peasantry. True—there were still certain nobles and gentlemen who were stout Covenanters. But many of the less virtuous nobles resented the rebukes of their stern friends. At first, the Church had been so strong that these

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rough barons had to submit to religious rebuke for their sins. But when Charles II. set the fashion in moral laxity, many of the conscienceless nobles were only too glad to go over to his side.

Moreover, the nobles and ruling classes of Scotland were desperately poor at this time. Robert Baillie tells us that these men had really become "our wracked nobilitie" — "Dukes Hamilton, the one execute, the other slaine, their state forfault" — "Huntlie—there is more debt on the House nor the land can pay" — "Douglas and his sonne Angus are quyet men, of no respect" — "Marschell, Rothes, Eglinton and his three sonnes, Crauford, Lauderdaill, and others, prisoners in England, and their lands sequesterate or gifted to English sojourns" — "Balmerinoch suddenly dead, and his sonne for publict debt keeps not the causey."

In the light of these facts, sorrowful enough but not surprising, human nature being what it is, many of the nobles made the Restoration an excuse for grasping forfeited estates and lucrative places by the side of the King. For money they left the Church of the Covenant, which they had never really loved.

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Add to all this, that the kirkmen of Scotland were far too apt to concentrate all their powers of debate on their disagreements rather than on those things of greater import which made them one in faith.

It is of the utmost importance at this stage in the story that we should realize these things, because they explain why Charles found it comparatively easy to impose his royal will on the people of Scotland. The King was now an open enemy of the Covenant, and he employed certain men after his own heart to enforce the Royal prerogative on those conscientious Covenanters who still held at all costs to the freedom of their own faith.

It dare hardly be doubted by any to-day that, from this time on to the end of the struggle, the very best men in the ranks of the Covenant suffered cruelly at the hands of certain King's men who knew no quarter. Who were some of these men?

There was that time-serving earl and mad statesman, John, Earl of Middleton.

John Middleton was one of those soldiers of fortune who had carved an unscrupulous way upwards by his sheer military ability. He began life

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as a poor man and went to France as a pikeman in Colonel Hepburn's regiment. When he returned to Scotland, he was so zealous for the Covenant, that he held up his right hand when taking his oath, and wished that his right arm might be his death if ever he forgot his vow. He fought under the Blue Banner of the Covenant in 1644 and 1645 and was greatly thought of by David Leslie.

But when Charles came to Scotland, Major Middleton became very friendly with the King. He commanded moss-troopers in the Highlands, and then, when the Covenanters encountered evil days and the King was in the ascendant, Middleton rose from one thing to another under the royal patronage until he was made an earl. As the Earl of Middleton he then became the King's representative in Scotland.

This turncoat had been excommunicated by the Church. He put on sackcloth in the church at Dundee to obtain his certificate. His innocent father had been killed by the soldiers of Montrose, and Middleton had afterwards burned the house of Montrose to the ground. But, at the desire of the King, he went to the gallows foot in Edinburgh, where the hashed body of the great

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Montrose lay without head, heart, or limbs, and there superintended the burial of his old enemy with an admixture of drunken sentiment and tears.

This coarse, brutish tippler climbed the gory steps of ambition until he seized a coronet. "It was a mad, roaring time," says Burnet, "and no wonder it was so, when the men of affairs were almost perpetually drunk."

Years afterwards, when Argyll's turn came, Middleton did not even wait for the King's warrant to arrive, but hurried on the ordeal of execution, and had it all over a day before the warrant arrived. He had his eye on Argyll's broad acres at that moment and wished to forestall Glencairn.

It is a parabolic fact that the very blood of good Master Guthrie's head dropped from the city spike on the coach of Middleton as he drove past. For it was blood and blood money all the time with Middleton. Faithless, ill-tempered, debauched — this was the man who, under Charles, had the power of life and death over the Covenanters.

But there were soldiers of a different type who served the King and harried the Covenanters.

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There was John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee, or the Bloody Clavers, as he was called. No man earns a nickname in history without good reason. So Clavers must be given the first place in the order of severity.

He was a smallish man, handsome in his own way, with a fair face and a hard heart. Even on his wedding day his lust for the Covenanters' blood could not be restrained. His defenders would doubtless call it a Cavalier's strict sense of duty. But—

“It is not in the power of love, nor any other folly, to alter my loyalty.” There spoke Clavers, the bridegroom.

By an irony of fate, he chose for his bride the Honourable Jean Cochrane, of the stout Covenanting family of Dundonald in Ayrshire. Her father was dead ; but her mother, a daughter of Cassillis, the unrelenting Covenanter, was naturally against the match, deploring her daughter's denial of “right principles.” Even Graham's own Royalist friends suspected him of playing double. But he was ever a man for his own way of things, so he defied gossip, and got his bride with a dowry of forty thousand merks Scots.

“For my own pairt,” said Clavers, “I look

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on myself as a cleaner. I may cur people guilty of that plaigue of Presbytery be conversing with them, but cannot be infected . . . and for the young ladie herself, I shall answer for her. Had she been right principled she would never in dispyt of her mother and relations have made choyse of a persicutor, as they call me."

The wedding took place at Paisley on Tuesday, the 10th day of June. That very morning General Dalzell, whom Claverhouse described in a letter of that time as being "in a terrible huff," sent news of a conventicle in Graham's military district. So, no sooner had Lady Jane been married to the "hell-wicked-witted, bloodthirsty Graham," as Patrick Walker calls him, than he was off to hunt the Presbyterian dogs for several days, "spread in small parties, and ranged as if we had been at hunting . . . but could learn nothing of those rogues." So the bride was left to console herself in solitude.

He called himself a cleanser, and the Covenanters' religion the plague of Presbytery. But this was his method of cleansing.

He would call together country boys and girls, some of them no more than six years old. The bairns were told to go down on their knees

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before the dragoons. There were times when he even ordered the soldiers to fire over the children's heads to terrify them the more. Then, after this hell-invented fun, he would tell them that their lives would be spared if only they revealed the whereabouts of their fathers and mothers. Tradition may be a lying jade, but not always.

He thought nothing of shooting a lad in his teens, or a plain countryman before his wife and family—this Viscount of Dundee who was a royal Cavalier. Men may argue for or against this man to-day as they please—but nothing in the soul of a good man can approve of these methods of Graham of Claverhouse in the execution of any duty. The Lord Himself has fixed the doom of all such: “Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea.”

Sir Thomas Dalyell of the Binns was another of that ilk. Commander of the King's army, he too had been a soldier of fortune, and when he came back from the Polish wars he was called

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“the Muscovy Beast,” because of his brutal habits. When only a lad he brawled in the streets of Linlithgow, and must have put to shame his father, Thomas Dalyell, who had signed the National Petition of 1637. As a returned officer, he raised the Scots Greys and employed them to hunt the Covenanters over the moors of lowland Scotland. Had he got his own way he would have hanged or exterminated every Covenanter in the land. At Lanark he threatened to roast Hackston of Rathillet when he was suffering from untended wounds which he had received at Ayrmoos. A fierce Royalist, Dalyell never shaved his head after the execution of Charles I. He could not reconcile himself to the wearing of boots, had usually but one coat on, and went about in an “antick habit.” Indeed, he was so ill-put-on, that in London on one occasion the boys followed him with jeers, much to the amusement of the King. Dalyell was never married, but he left his property to his illegitimate children. Little blame to the Cavaliers, however, when Charles, the King, set them such an immoral example.

In Scotland at that time it was death to laugh at Dalyell of Binns. There is a tradition in the neighbourhood that his favourite game at Binns

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was hell. And this is how he played it. After a hearty meal, and a heartier drink, he gave his guests a whip apiece, and locked the door on them and himself. Then followed lashings and cursings, and the last man standing was the black master.

His methods of torture were all his own. On mere suspicion he thrust a goodly number of men into an ugly dungeon at Kilmarnock, called the Thieves' Hole. They were so close-packed that neither by night nor day could they move, but had to stand straight up. One of them died under the circumstances. When David Finlay of Newmilns asked for one night's time to prepare himself for death, Dalyell's answer to the servant who proffered the request was a bullet for the prisoner. In Kilmarnock, on another occasion, he threw a woman into a deep cellar under the house of Dean which was full of toads and reptiles. Her shrieks were weird to hear, and she almost lost her wits. He put lighted matches between the fingers of another for hours, until she died of shock, having lost one hand. He struck a prisoner at the bar with the pommel of his sword, and when William Carstares was enduring agonies from the thumb-screws, Dalyell lost his temper and threatened to

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roast him alive if he did not divulge what he knew.

That was long ago. To-day, if you look at a certain portrait of Thomas Dalyell which hangs at the Binns, you will find a note attached to this effect : “ After he had procured himself a lasting name in the wars, here it was that he rested his old age, and pleased himself with the culture of curious flowers and plants.” A pleasing picture. But, to those of us who associate a true soldier with deeds of the highest honour, the name of Sir Thomas Dalyell of the Binns will always mean the denial of chivalry. This man, like any other, can be convicted by the words of his own mouth : “ Heist us moir armes and bandeliers,” said he, when he set about “ settling ” the country, “ I am confident is not possible to do without the inhabitens be remouet or destroiet.” His gospel was one of cruelty and extermination. Little wonder that the Covenanters were, at times, driven to dreadful extremes. To-day the name of Tam Dalyell still stinks in the nostrils of all who love their fellowmen.

But there were others whose lusts were of the same order—men like Sir James Turner, whose nickname was “ Bloody Bite-the-Sheep ”; Sir

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James Johnstone of Westerhall, who commanded the boy Hislop to be shot; Sir William Ballantine, who, according to Sir Robert Moray, exacted money and bonds, raided cattle, and harassed both innocent and guilty alike—"His oppressions, murders, robberies, rapes, adulteries, etc., were so many and atrocious, that the managers themselves were ashamed of them," adds Wodrow—and, indeed, after what Sir William Ballantine did at the public-house of Balmaghie, we could believe him capable of any devilry.

One Dumfriesshire laird, however, has for ever been enshrined in literature by Sir Walter Scott—Sir James Grierson of Lag. "Red-gauntlet was aye for the strong hand, and his name is kenned as wide as Claverhouse's or Tam Dalyell's. Glen, nor dargle, nor mountain, nor cave could hide the puir hill folk when Red-gauntlet was out with bugle and bloodhound after them, as if they had been sae mony deer. And troth, when they fand them, they didna mak' muckle mair ceremony than Hielandman wi' a roebuck. It was just, 'Will ye tak' the Test?'—if not, 'Mak' ready, present, fire!'—and there lay the recusant."

A portrait to the life, surely, of the Laird of

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Lag. The old tower of Lag is a ruin to-day, for Redgauntlet of the iron hand was the last laird, his son having gone out in the '15, and the estate being forfeited. But memories in Dumfries and the Stewartry are long, and Grierson of Lag is still remembered with a shiver of the shoulders. Six years before Lag died, Patrick Walker summed up the character of Grierson in these dreadful words: "A great persecutor, a great swearer, a great whorer, blasphemer, drunkard, liar and cheat, and yet out of hell."

On 21st February 1685, Lag and his horsemen surprised John Bell of Whiteside with some other Covenanters at prayer on Kirkconnel moor in the parish of Tongueland. Bell's mother was Marion MacCulloch of Ardwall, and after his death became the Countess of Kenmure. Bell had been a forfeited fugitive for five years, so he received no consideration from Lag. But he begged leave to pray for a few minutes before he died.

"What, the devil! Have you not had time enough all these years?"

And he was shot with the others instantly.

Decent burial, even, was refused. But some time after that, Lag met Viscount Kenmure along

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with Claverhouse at Kirkcudbright. Kenmure challenged Lag for his cruelty to one whom he knew to be a gentleman and so nearly related to him.

Lag answered with an oath : “ Tak’ him if you will, and salt him in your beef barrel.”

Kenmure immediately drew his sword. But Claverhouse threw himself between them and prevented further bloodshed.

It all comes back to us as we stand reading the inscription on John Bell’s tomb in Anwoth Kirkyard.

Middleton, Claverhouse, Dalzell of the Binns, Turner, Ballantine, Grierson of Lag ! If there are any who can cleanse these men from shedding the blood of the martyrs, let them speak.

CHAPTER VIII

SAMUEL RUTHERFORD, THE SAINT OF ANWOTH

ON an October morning, when the warm sunshine turns the late autumn into an Indian summer, a hush of wind stirs the golden trees in the kirkyard of Anwoth and forbids all foolish talk in such a paradise of peace. A great ash tree hides the monstrosity of a modern tomb. Above the simple old-world graves, and the mossy walls of the ancient kirk which are all decked out with little ferns and faded flowers, a robin is singing very plaintively its song of reluctant good-bye. The year is passing, with the mystery of a great stillness on its face. The whole place is instinct with a sense of reminiscence, beauty, and changing things. And yet—over all, the blue of the eternal sky stretches serene.

Thus, Anwoth becomes to every reverent soul who visits it to-day a parable of our earthly pilgrimage to Emmanuel's Land.

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An old kirk road emerges from the trees opposite the entrance to the kirk. Often must John Bell of Whiteside have come down that road on a Sabbath morning, long ago, from his own valley of Skyreburn. But now! Beside the ruined sanctuary, on the very spot where he once listened to the Word of God, there stands his martyr's tomb. The grave of Ardwall—his mother's family—stands at the farther end of the grass-grown floor, and in the gable above there is an eastern window which is set to one side, like the head of Jesus on the Cross.

It was in this sweet spot that Samuel Rutherford began his ministry—that little fair man who showed the people of Scotland the loveliness of Christ.

But the story begins far from Anwoth, in the village of Nisbet, close by the Teviot, in the border parish of Crailing.

The village well was a favourite play-spot for the bairns of Nisbet. They would gather round it and look down at the clear spring water bubbling up from below—a miracle which has always drawn the wonder of those who have the soul to see strange things behind the materialistics of this world.



ANWOTH KIRK

SAMUEL RUTHERFORD

Already, the glitter of the stars was in the eyes of little Samuel Rutherford. He would come and gaze down into the mysterious deeps of the well, fascinated by the wonder of it all. But one day, in seeking the secret of the well, the little fellow fell in.

His companions at play took to their heels and spread the news. But when the distracted mother and the neighbours hurried to the spot, the purpose-like child had already scrambled out and was sitting, all wet and dripping, on a knoll of grass. When they asked him how he came to be sitting there, he exclaimed :

“A bonny white man came and drew me out of the well!” So he began life with a vision of Jesus, and he kept the vision to the end.

He went to school at Jedburgh, the town which was so often “dang doon” by the English and “biggit up” again by the Scots. The boy with the keen intellect must often have heard stories about Surrey’s savageries in 1523, when each Jedburgh man had to stand up to four Englishmen, crying aloud as he fought, “Jeddart’s here!” the old battle-cry of the burgh.

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From school at Jedburgh, Samuel Rutherford went to college at Edinburgh, and showed so much scholarship that at the age of twenty-three he was occupying a professor's chair. But a breath of scandal dimmed the brightness of his youth, and after teaching Latinity for two years he had to resign.

Then came his marriage, preparation for the ministry, and settlement in Anwoth.

Despite the greatness of his repute elsewhere in his later years, Samuel Rutherford will be known to the end of time as the minister of Anwoth. The glamour of that early ministry of nine years still clings like an old-world fragrance about the roofless ruins of his little kirk. There, he ministered to the country folks, shepherding God's sheep among the hills and valleys which lie about the Water of Fleet.

His manse was called by the homely name of Bush of Bield. The minister rose at three o'clock every morning to read and pray. All through his life he was absorbed in Christ. He would fall asleep at night muttering about Jesus. He knew his folk and could name every one of them. From Viscount Kenmure to the smallest herd boy, he was revered by the whole parish.

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“For such a piece of clay as Mr. Rutherford,” said James Urquhart, the minister of Kinloss, “I never knew one in Scotland like him. He seems to be always praying, always preaching, always visiting the sick, always teaching in the schools, always writing treatises, always reading and studying.”

In after years he could never drive the thought of Anwoth from his heart. From Aberdeen, the cold, grey, northern town of his banishment, he wrote these words with tears in his eyes :

“When I think of the sparrows and swallows that build their nests in the kirk of Anwoth, and of my dumb Sabbaths, my sorrowful, bleared eyes look askint upon Christ, and present Him as angry.” He did not love “the unnatural town of Aberdeen,” but wrote this icy word while still his heart was hot with memories of blessed Anwoth, “Northern love is cold.”

Yet, although the birds were always singing in the woods of Fleet, this little fair man of Christ was not without his sorrows in the Bush of Bield. From the narrow door of the manse his girl wife and her two children were carried out to be laid under the green sods of Anwoth Kirkyard. And yet, in this, as

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in all his throes of experience, Christ was his refuge, and

“The dews of sorrow
Were lusted by His love.”

As a preacher he was known far and near.

One Saturday night a stranger arrived at Bush of Bield. He asked for shelter, and was given kindly hospitality. In the evening, he was called upon to join the family circle for the usual prayers and catechising. On being asked how many commandments there were, the stranger answered that there were eleven.

“Eleven?” exclaimed Rutherford in surprise.

“Yes—eleven.”

And it was remarked how backward the stranger was in his knowledge of the Bible.

On the Sunday morning, Rutherford, as usual, rose early, to meditate among the bird-haunted trees. As he walked up and down the path, which is now called Rutherford’s Walk, he heard the sound of a voice. Looking about him, he saw the stranger on his knees among the trees. He was pouring out his soul for the people in a prayer which was expressed in language of great felicity. Rutherford waited until his unknown guest rose from his knees, and then stated his

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conviction that he must have a cure of souls. The stranger thereupon admitted that he was Archbishop Ussher. He was on his way back to Ireland ; but so anxious was he to hear Rutherford preach, that he disguised himself, lest the Presbyterian minister might not receive a bishop. But Rutherford gave him great welcome, and asked him to preach in Anwoth Kirk. The Archbishop did so, using for the day the Presbyterian form. Then he gave out his text :

“ A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.”

“ There,” whispered Rutherford to his wife in the pew, “ is the Eleventh Commandment.”

If only we could think of Samuel Rutherford living and dying, like a St Francis, in tree-embowered Anwoth where the birds are always singing !

But it was not to be.

While this perfervid son of the Covenant was shepherding his flock in Anwoth, he was keeping himself in touch with the Kirk strife of the day. He was not only a scholar and preacher, but a man of action. Sometimes he laid aside his holy dreams, his ecstatic worship, and his exact learning—and then he became the most pugnacious

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theologian in Scotland. Hot-headed, hot-hearted, of a very subtle wit, he once said of his own mixed personality, "I am made of extremes . . . my mother hath borne me a man of contention."

So Master Samuel Rutherford, like the other preachers of the Covenant, plunged into the battle; but his only weapons were his own tongue, his fearless pen, and the Word of God. He was by no means a perfect man, as he himself knew only too well

"How many a spot defiles the robe
That wraps an earthly saint!"

He had a fiery disposition, and he showed little mercy to his opponents when he was thrusting at them with his remorseless logic.

When, for example, he wrote his famous *Lex Rex*, or *The Law and the Prince*; his maxim was, "The Law is not the King's own, but it is given to him on trust." He literally shattered the old mischievous idea of the Divine Right of kings. "Power is a birthright of the people, borrowed from them; they may let it out for their good, and may resume it when a man was drunk with it."

What a description of the strength of the

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people ! And what a perfect picture of Charles the Second !—a man drunk with power.

It is easy to imagine what the King and his friends thought of *Lex Rex*. The book was immediately burned at Edinburgh, St Andrews, and London.

But Samuel Rutherford was not only a great preacher and controversialist. He was a great scholar. We remember the part which he played among the Westminster Divines, taking a hand in framing the Confession of Faith, in composing the Catechism, and in the struggle against the Bishops.

“For the great parts God had given him,” said Robert Baillie, “Mr. Samuel’s presence was very necessary.”

There is a draft of a Shorter Catechism in his handwriting in the Edinburgh University Library. This man of God, and thorough scholar, who had begun life as a professor of Latin in Edinburgh, was afterwards to be elected a professor of Divinity at St. Andrews. There, when his Anwoth ministry was over, he spent the rest of his life, as a professor, as colleague to Robert Blair in the Town Kirk, as Principal of New College, and as Rector of the University.

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He had two pens—a gracious letter-writing pen which has moved many a reader with golden thoughts of God; and a controversial pen, which stung the King's men and the bishops into anger.

“I desire not,” said he, “to go on the lee side or sunny side of religion, or to put truth betwixt me and a storm. My Saviour did not so with me, who in His suffering took the windy side of the hill.”

Certain it is that Samuel Rutherford did not take the bieldy side of the brae in his later years. He was tried before the Court of High Commission and banished to the city of Aberdeen. There, he suffered that most terrible of all afflictions—“dumb Sabbaths.” For, if Rutherford was anything, he was first and last a preacher of Christ. Literary critics to-day may haggle over his faults of taste in the Letters, and his impassioned imagery in the Sermons; but in his own day he drew the souls of men to God by his eloquence, and in our day he still lures us to better things by his gracious correspondence. To this man the Sabbath was his crowning day. We are told that he had “a strange utterance, a kind of a skreigh,” and one of his hearers said

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that, "Many a time I thought he would have flown out of the pulpit when he came to speak of Christ." Yet, in Aberdeen, this bold ambassador of Jesus was compelled to keep silent.

To-day, his Letters are among the classics of the Covenant—those quaint letters which he wrote to godly women like Marion MacNaught, Viscountess Kenmure, the Lady Gordon of Lochinvar, and Margaret Ballantine. He had godly men also among his correspondents, such as Lord Lothian, to whom he once wrote :

"To want temptations is the greatest temptation of all."

To the Earl of Cassillis he wrote :

"The earldom of Cassillis is but a shadow to the city not made with hands."

To Gordon of Earlston, Gordon of Lochinvar, and Gordon of Knockbreck ; to ministers like David Dickson, Hugh MacKail, and John Livingstone ; to plain countrymen, bien burghers and refined gentlewomen—he wrote these two hundred and twenty letters which throb with an other-world ecstasy.

But the Privy Council stripped him of all his university offices, deposed him from his charge in the Town Kirk of St. Andrews, and accused

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him of high treason. Messengers were sent from Edinburgh to bring him to that city for execution. But when they arrived he was already on his death-bed.

His thin, wasted fingers handled the fatal parchment on which his summons was written. It gave him little concern. Rather did he see in it a suggestion for the reply he made.

“Tell them,” he said, with the old light of the stars in his eyes, “tell them, that I have got a summons already to face a Superior Judge and Judicatory, and it behoves me to answer this first summons—and, ere your day arrives, I shall be where few kings and great folks come ! ”

This last word, with something of the old and very human bite of controversy in it, makes us love this soldier of the Cross the more and not the less. It so roused the Council that the members decreed, with a poor maliciousness, that Samuel Rutherford should not be allowed to die within the precincts of the College.

But Lord Burleigh, to his everlasting credit, stood up and protested in these noble words :

“Ye have voted that honest man out of his college, but ye cannot vote him out of heaven.”

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So Samuel Rutherford died as he had lived, with a vision of Christ before his eyes. Little, tree-embowered, bird-haunted Anwoth by the waters of the Fleet, his first home, remained to the end the dearest spot on earth to him. But whether we stand to-day by John Bell's martyr tomb close by the ruined kirk, listening to the robin's song amid a shower of golden leaves, or think of that death-bed in St. Andrews, the little grey city of the scarlet gown, we always hear the sough of his pilgrim's song :

“I've wrestled on towards heaven,
'Gainst storm, and wind, and tide ;
Now, like a weary traveller
That leaneth on his guide
Amid the shades of evening
While sinks life's lingering sand,
I hail the glory dawning
In Immanuel's Land.”

CHAPTER IX

ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL OF ARGYLL, MARQUIS AND MARTYR

THERE were martyr-men of every rank. This was the strength of the Covenant. The bond of faith united nobles, lairds, ministers and common folks. When it came to suffering and the block, all were one in the common cause of Christ.

The most illustrious noble to lay down his life for the Covenant was Archibald Campbell, the first and only Marquis of Argyll. He was indeed the first victim of a reign of terror.

You will not find his name attached to any copies of the National Covenant. For this most powerful noble in Scotland did not see eye to eye with the men of the Covenant at first. It was only during the Great Glasgow Assembly that Argyll took an open stand by the side of Alexander Henderson. But after that, the great

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marquis never wavered in his devotion to the Covenant.

He was an absolute monarch in his own dominion of Argyll. He could at any time bring five thousand men into the field. He had, moreover, real personal affinities with the Calvinistic principles of the Covenanters. At the time of the Glasgow Assembly he was thirty-one years of age and had just come into his title.

Let it be said at once that John Howie of Lochgoin passed a judgment of perfection on the Marquis of Argyll when he wrote, that "he had piety for a Christian, sense for a counsellor, courage for a martyr, and soul for a king."

And yet—a strange combine of truth and expediency, principles and politics, cold courage and home-drawn caution, was this same Archibald Campbell, *Gillesbeg Gruamach* of the grim countenance and squint eyes. Dubiety played upon him from the first, as the winds from his own Glen Shira and Duncuach had played about him as a child. Because of his virtues and failings, Argyll is one of the enigmas of history.

Studious, bookish, introspective ; expert in the diplomacies of a cruel time ; a man whose hand never willingly lifted one of his own clay-

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mores ; and whose soul was plastic to the circumstances of his age—Argyll's worst enemies had, nevertheless, to admit that he walked on to the scaffold at last with a pulse which Cunningham, his physician, certified as beating at its normal, and without a shred of fear !

And yet ! History often pricks the memory with points of pain.

When that great soldier, Montrose, swept down on Inveraray Castle from Loch Awe to burn and harry the homeland of the Campbells, Argyll stepped aboard a fishing-boat and sailed down Loch Fyne for his castle at Roseneath. At Inverlochy, while his own clan was waiting for him to lead them against the onslaught of Montrose, who himself had led his whole army on a little meal and water over the terrific winter dangers of the Corryarrick mountains, Argyll, troubled with a wounded shoulder, allowed himself to be hurried on board his own galley, the *Black Sail*, when the battle was just beginning. He was no soldier. He balked at the very thought of slaughter. He was all for the checkmate of civil affairs, never for the clash of steel or the martial adventure. His advisers played upon him in the moment of danger. So he was not there to look

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upon his clan cut down in hundreds until the waters of Linnhe ran red with their blood.

Forby all this, he was ambitious. The greatest of all the Highland chiefs ; the crowner of the King at Scone ; the wary welcomer of Cromwell, who supped with him in Edinburgh ; the ettler after a princely husband for his daughter, Lady Anne—Argyll was a fisher in drumly waters, as perhaps was natural to a great statesman who was born in troublous times, and brought up at his own castle Court of Inveraray, where none would tell him the truth, and all had the soft tongue of flattery. His father turned a Roman Catholic in his dotage and left him a legacy of oblique vision and a by-name.

But who shall judge this enigma of a Highland chief who hated the sight of a dirk ? Who dare dwell upon his faults apart from the dilemmas of his own time ? Did not Argyll step right up to death at the hinder end, as a Christian should, earning this great repute from his covenanted friends, “ Piety for a Christian, sense for a counsellor, courage for a martyr, soul for a king ” ?

Six months after Charles II. entered London, the Marquis of Argyll went up to Court to congratulate the King whom he had previously

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crowned at Scone. The Covenanters warned him of the risk he was taking. But at that moment Argyll mistook the King for a gentleman. Charles, who had promised Argyll a dukedom, a garter, and £40,000, would not even receive him. On the contrary, a room was prepared in the Tower, and there, for the best part of a year, lay the great Marquis, until he was sent to Scotland for trial.

A mock trial it was from first to last. The advocates refused to plead for him, the judges were all King's men, and the verdict was a foregone conclusion. Yet, from January to May, they harassed Argyll on fourteen points, before they finally condemned him.

"My lord," said George Hutchison, the minister, on the morning of the execution, when Argyll walked up to the maiden, "keep your grip siccar."

"Mr. Hutchison," he replied, "I am not afraid to be surprised by fear."

Then he knelt down, with his head in position, and prayed. He gave a signal with his hand, and in a moment Argyll was with God.



ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL, MARQUIS OF ARGYLL

CHAPTER X

JAMES SHARP, THE JUDAS OF THE COVENANT

THE whole atmosphere of the soul changes from the celestial to the sinister when we turn from Samuel Rutherford to James Sharp. If it is the first duty of a historian to be scrupulously fair in his judgment of men and things, it is also the first instinct of man to approve that which is true and despise that which is crooked. A whole book might be written on the By-name in History, as a commentary on human nature. Here, surely, is a case in point. For it was Cromwell who remarked of the Archbishop: "That gentleman after the Scotch way ought to be called Sharp of that ilk."

Let us turn, then, to the contemplation of this man who has so often been called the Judas of the Covenant.

James Sharp was born in Banff Castle on 4th May 1613. His father was factor to the Earl

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of Findlater, and his mother was a kinswoman to the Earl of Rothes. When a man becomes notorious, myths and legends are apt to gather about his name. It is said that Sharp was connected with a common bagpiper, as indeed it was said of the great Montrose that in his youth he had swallowed the devil in the shape of a toad. If we are to keep our true perspective of judgment, we must never forget that those men lived in a very superstitious age. The people generally believed that spirits, good and evil, roamed everywhere. The Beltane Fire was lit with awe. The devil appeared in the shapes of animals, men, and things. Even Leighton, that saintly prelate, sent certain Covenanters to doom with the devil. Cromwell's soldiers were astonished at the superstitious barbarities of Scotland, and would not allow women who were suspected of being witches to be tortured—that is, probed by professional “prickers,” hung up by their thumbs, whipped with lighted candles put to the soles of their feet or into their mouths, and burned, drowned, or thrown into dungeons to die. As we shall see later on, James Sharp in his last hour was found to have in his pocket a box which contained a buzzing bee.

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He graduated at King's College under the Aberdeen doctors, and then went to Oxford, where his health gave way. He was, thereafter, a professor of Philosophy at St Andrews for a time, and then the Earl of Crawford appointed him minister of Crail. Burnet tells us that "he had a very small proportion of learning, and was but an indifferent preacher." His portrait gives us the impression of a rather weak, unmanly character. But he was ambitious, unscrupulous, and woefully fond of great folks. When he was in Crail, one of his ambitions was to become a minister in Edinburgh. But the General Assembly refused to translate him.

A straw will tell how the wind blows, and even in the early days of his ministry this unspiritual man was found out by Margaret Bruce of Kingsbarns manse. Sharp was eager to marry her. But that long-headed lady thought she would like to hear him preach first. So she disguised herself one Sunday and went to Crail. The sermon was especially good. But, on returning to her father's study, she saw a book of sermons which had just arrived from London. On opening it, she found the sermon which Sharp had preached, word for

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word. After that he had to look for a bride elsewhere.

He was often away from Crail, intriguing, scheming, pulling wires for his own ends. He was of those who are always looking before they leap, weighing the chances of life, a true type of Master Facing-Both-Ways.

When Charles came back to Whitehall, after the Restoration, Sharp, as a Covenanted minister in Scotland, went up to London to represent the Kirk. But he stayed too long in London. He was infected by the King. He saw how the wind was blowing, and trimmed his sail to catch the breeze. His soul being set on place and power, the rest soon followed, and he became a traitor to the cause of the Covenant in Scotland. The very best of men may change their minds, but only the worst of men can be in correspondence with both sides at the same time.

A traitor, however, should never put pen to paper. Sharp was a clever letter-writer. Let us glance at a few letters he wrote at this critical time.

The first was written to that brave minister, Robert Douglas, and the date is March 1660. When Douglas read it, he must have thought of

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Sharp as a zealous Covenanter who was up in London doing his best to serve the Kirk. For Sharp mentions the fact, that "the cavaliers point me out as the Scottish Presbyter." Then, after a visit to Holland, where he visited the King at Breda, he adds this in another letter to Robert Douglas: "You know I am against Episcopacy, root and branch."

The next correspondence, a few months later, is with Patrick Drummond, a Presbyterian minister in England. But there now appears that tone of protest and injured innocence which is the common mark of one who is about to turn a moral somersault. "I have served the interests of others more than my own: I never did seek anything of any: whatever lot I may meet, I scorn to prostitute my conscience and honesty to base unbecoming allurements . . . I am a Scot and a Presbyter . . . my fence is in God, who knoweth that my regard to my country and this Kirk doth preponder any selfish consideration."

After these words, the next letter, written on 21st May 1661 to the Earl of Middleton, should not surprise us. What does Mr Facing-Both-Ways now say to the leader of the Drunken

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Parliament? That he has been holding conferences with Lord Clarendon, the Bishop of London, and the Bishop of Worcester about the setting up once more of Episcopacy in Scotland ; and that this proposal has his hearty approval ; and “ now I trust all opposing designs are dashed, and a foundation laid for a superstructure which will render your name precious to the succeeding generations.”

Here at last, Judas has declared himself, and declared himself all the more offensively because he has mixed his diplomacies with some fulsome flattery.

Not that Episcopacy is for ever wrong, and that Presbytery is for ever right. For God has blessed mankind through both. But it must be for ever wrong that any man should play fast and loose with two sides on any question, especially when he himself emerges with the first prize. It was this double-dealing that made Sharp the Judas of the Covenant, and the worst-hated man in Scotland. But the explanation came in December of this same year, 1661, when the bishops were restored in Scotland. James Hamilton became Bishop of Galloway, Robert Leighton became Bishop of Dunblane, and James Sharp

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became Archbishop of all Scotland with his episcopal seat in St. Andrews.

The new archbishop was consecrated in Westminster Abbey. When he was in Scotland a few weeks previous to his consecration, he would have been well-advised to keep away from the old friend whom he had befooled. But Sharp was never conspicuous for his spiritual sensibilities. So he actually called upon Robert Douglas, to whom he had written his Covenanting epistles from London. He told that honest man that the King really wished to make Douglas the archbishop. Douglas scorned the idea. But Sharp insisted, and then rose to take his leave. Robert Douglas rose also, opened the door, and showed James Sharp out. Then, he called him back, and with a touch of mettle in his voice said :

“ James, I see *you* will engage : I perceive you are clear : *you* will be the Bishop of St. Andrews. Take it, and the curse of God with it.”

He clapped Sharp on the shoulder and shut the door on him. That was the end of a friendship between two men who had been as sib as brothers.

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To all this there could be but one sequel. Let us now learn what that sequel was.

James Sharp not only became an archbishop, but the President of the Council in Edinburgh—that hateful tribunal which tried the Covenanting prisoners in Edinburgh.

Could the whirligig of time have brought about a more terrible irony? Flouted by his old friends, blamed by the common people, despised by the aristocracy, this miserable man knew that the country was against him. So, like a true turncoat, he now set the law like a bloodhound upon all who were opposed to Episcopacy. His Court of Commission was nicknamed the *Crail Court*. Every ecclesiastical offence came under its survey. An offender could be fined or imprisoned without any indictments, defences, or evidence led. With Sharp at the head and Turner at the tail of this Court of Inquisition—which the author of *Naphtali* called an “illegal monster”—there was little hope of mercy or justice.

The minutes of this Court have not yet been found. But, if they ever are brought to light, they will make lurid reading. The author of *Naphtali*, however, has recorded enough to

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make us realize the barbarities of the Court while Sharp was president.

Here are a few examples.

After the battle of Rullion Green, eleven Covenanting prisoners reminded Sharp that they were under a promise of mercy.

“Very well,” said Sharp, “you were pardoned as soldiers, but you are not acquitted as subjects.”

And the eleven men were hanged.

Torture by the Boot and the Thumbscrews was one of the ordinary methods of getting answers. It has been truly said that Sharp gave his church the Boots. When, for example, Hugh MacKail was brought before the Court, he was put under the torture of the Boot. That is, the prisoner’s leg was enclosed in an iron case : a wedge of iron was placed between the naked knee and the edge of the machine ; then the executioner stood with a mallet in his hand ready to strike. MacKail, at this time, was far gone in consumption. Nevertheless, his emaciated spindle-shank was thrust into the marrow-squirting Boot. Eleven times the mallet descended by the order of Rothes—that coarse illiterate libertine who excused his own uncleanness by saying that “the King’s Commissioner

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ought to represent his person"—until the poor limb was shapeless.

Yet all that the young martyr said was :

"I protest solemnly in the sight of God, I can say no more, though all the joints in my body were in as great anguish as my leg."

When Sharp, as president, was appealed to, he only answered, "I can do nothing."

We are all the more certain of this, because Dr Matthew MacKail, a cousin of the martyr, brought the influence of the Douglasses to bear on both Sharp and Burnet, but these heartless men of God refused to interfere. Indeed, a manuscript, which was probably written by Dr Matthew MacKail himself, records the fact that "there came a letter from the King discharging the execution of moe : but the Bishop of St Andrews (Sharp) kept it up till Mr Hew was executed : and then, no moe were pannelled for that business."

Can anyone wonder that the anger of the Covenanters was at white heat against this man, whose callous cruelties were practised now upon the members of a Church which was once his ?

The limit of their endurance was nearly

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reached, and Sharp was courting a dreadful retribution for himself.

The blow fell on him in the year 1679. That very year, he had added an insult to all his previous injuries by framing a law which was to give liberty to kill without trial anyone who went armed to a meeting in the fields.

The Archbishop was just on the eve of a journey to London to gain the King's consent. But before leaving Scotland he set out for St Andrews in a coach and six along with his daughter.

This man, who knew that he was now hated by the Covenanters, had already been fired upon in the High Street of Edinburgh by James Mitchell, a "stickit minister" who was "a lean hollow-cheeked man of a truculent character." It was just such irresponsible men who were liable now to take the law into their own hands and embroil the Covenanters in trouble. For the strain of the times was more than ill-nourished minds could stand, and Sharp's cruelties were ill to suffer.

It was about this time that a band of thirteen men foregathered on the lonely Fifeshire moors

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to plan some kind of chastisement for William Carmichael, the drunken depute to the Sheriff Principal of Fife. This man had outraged the feelings of the Fife folk by his abominable acts. He was one of Sharp's men. That was enough. So, early on the morning of the 2nd of May, a scout informed the conspirators that Carmichael was out with his dogs on Tarvit Hill. One of the thirteen, being suspected of treachery, was sent back, and the remaining twelve soon found that Carmichael had been warned of his danger and had returned to Cupar. Other three, growing weary of the fruitless search, turned their horses for home.

Suddenly the little group of horsemen saw a boy running towards them. He brought an altogether unexpected bit of news. The archbishop's state coach was coming! Here was a new development. Each man looked at the other. They had all come out to whip a drunken sheriff-depute. Now the Judas of the Covenant had been thrust into their hands. He had betrayed them. He had done his best to wipe out "the gangrene of dissent," as he called the faith of his old friends. Was he not even now on the eve of going to London to get the King's consent

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for this new and intolerable law which would make any armed conventicler liable to be shot at sight ?

It all seemed a Providence to those men, who were only too willing to see a Providence in it.

“ Truly, this is of God,” said one, “ it seemeth that God hath delivered him into our hands.”

All of them, except Hackston of Rathillet, avowed a clear call to kill. But he had scruples. Having had a private quarrel with Sharp, he maintained that whatever he did now would be imputed to personal revenge, and that would mar his testimony.

So, when Hackston refused to lead the little band “ to execute the justice of God ” on “ the murtherer of His saints,” Balfour of Kinloch, a little, ferocious-looking, squint-eyed man who was more of a fanatic than a good Christian, cried out :

“ Gentlemen, follow me.”

And yet Hackston, who would not lead them, said, “ I will not leave you.”

So he kept near them on his white horse, when he ought to have ridden away.

When the carriage reached the rising ground, the archbishop saw the group of horsemen. It

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was a lonely spot. But although he was only three and a half miles from St Andrews, and could see the towers of the little city by the sea, James Sharp was afraid.

“Drive, drive, drive!” he called to the coachman.

But the bullets of Balfour, Russell, and Henderson were already whizzing into the carriage, and James Russell cried:

“Judas, be taken!”

The carriage was then seized. The horses were set free. The servants were bound.

“Come out!” cried Russell again.

For they did not wish to injure Isobel Sharp.

But the archbishop would not come out. They fired into the coach again and again, and thought he was killed. When they were on the point of riding away, Isobel Sharp, in her innocent thankfulness, cried out between her sobs,

“There is life yet!”

That brought them all crowding round the coach once more, except Rathillet.

“Gentlemen, spare me! I will give you money,” gasped the archbishop.

“Thy money perish with thee,” was the reply.

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Then they stabbed wildly at him in the coach. The stabs stung him, and he came out.

One account tells us that at that moment Sharp caught sight of Hackston sitting on his horse at a little distance, with a cloak about his mouth, having neither the courage to strike a blow nor the will-power to ride away.

“Sir—you are a gentleman. You will protect me?”

“I shall lay no hands upon you,” replied Rathillet.

The others told Sharp to pray, but he would not. So they fired at him. But so loutish and nervous were they, that even then they did not kill him. Last of all they drew their swords.

Was there ever a more wretched sight? A group of strong men armed, against one old man, wounded and defenceless! No wonder Isobel Sharp sprang forward to protect her father.

“Spare these grey hairs!” cried Hackston at last.

But it was too late. A flash of steel blades, and the man who had betrayed his Kirk and slain his countrymen, himself was foully murdered on the moor. Afterwards, a wound was found on his body for every assassin present.

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They rifled his pockets, and found a tobacco-box, a Bible, and some state papers. These they took away to a barn close by and examined them. When they opened the box, a live bee flew out.

“The devil! His familiar!” one of them cried as the bee buzzed by them.

They also found in the box some nail-parings which were probably used for scaring witches.

So, with an odour of black magic about him, the Judas of the Covenant died.

To-day, you will find a monument erected on the spot where the murder took place. Magus moor is now partly covered with trees. A little path, much trodden, leads you from the public road, by the side of a ditch-like stream, and through the wood to this place of gruesome memories. There, with Andrew Guillin’s grave not far off, you may sit in sequestered silence and realize the whole scene.

It was a foul murder. Such deeds could never do the cause of the Covenant any good. But we breathe freer when we learn that the leaders of the Covenanting army condemned the murder and repudiated the murderers. Balfour of Kinloch was not a religious man, but a fanatic.



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The Covenanters had already refused him the Sacrament. He was one of the men whose help was more of a curse than a blessing to the Covenant.

As for Hackston of Rathillet, that sinister figure, sitting on his white horse, his cloak about his mouth, as if in terror of the sight of murder done, yet looking on immovable, miserable, swithering—let a poet of the Kirk in later times limn his features for us in words which he puts into the mouth of John Balfour of Kinloch :

“I killed the Archbishop while Hackston stood by,
And he was as much in the deed as I ;
But, for they had a quarrel, his mind was not clear,
Our nice punctilious cavalier !
O, we must not sully the end we seek,
With a personal grudge or a private pique !
So, we stand aside, in the noonday sun,
Like a stern old Roman, and see the deed done.
Was he better than I with my dirk to the hilt
In the old man’s heart when his blood was spilt ?
He had scruples forsooth—and the priest’s head was grey,
And he did not the deed, nor yet said it nay.
Ba ! Give me a conscience that rules with a will,
Or one that can hold its peace and be still ;
But, neither the Lord nor the devil will care
For your conscience that scruples and splits a hair.”

CHAPTER XI

A HANDFUL OF ACTS AND WHAT THEY MEANT

IN order to understand the real reasons for the Covenanters' resistance of King and Government, it is absolutely essential to know something about those Acts which were passed to bind the conscience of the people. It was just those Bars of Conscience which made the people sign so many Bonds of Faith. The reading over of Acts of Parliament generally leaves us languid. But to read those old Acts which were passed to harass the Covenanters makes the blood boil with a passion of protest.

To-day, the will of the people becomes the law of the land, and there exists an elaborate machinery of constitutional politics to secure the freedom of democracy. But in the seventeenth century, democracy had to fight with whatever weapons were available. The commonest and most peaceable way of voicing the will of the

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people in those old days was the drawing up of Covenants and Bonds which were signed by a great number of citizens.

But it was just this expression of the People's will that kings, who believed in their own divine right, desired to ignore and suppress. So Act after Act was passed to compel the people to conform.

Here are some of those Acts, or Bars to Conscience, which the Scots Covenanters resisted to the death.

There was the notorious Glasgow *Act of Eviction* of 1662, which the mad and muddled Privy Council passed without a dissentient voice.

It decreed that all ministers who did not accept Episcopacy and obtain the sanction of patron and bishop before 1st November must leave their parishes. Andrew Fairfull, Bishop of Glasgow, whose "merry tales" disgusted Leighton, declared that there were not more than ten ministers who would stand by their consciences and part with their livings and manses. But that winter, between three and four hundred parted with their stipends, kirks and manses rather than be untrue to their consciences.

When this stupid Act was passed, the Duke

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of Hamilton declared to Burnet that the Councillors "were all so drunk that day, that they were not capable of considering anything that was laid before them." But the result of the Act sobered these drunken legislators, and they extended the time to the 1st of February. Not one of the four hundred, however, came back.

In the dilemma, a crowd of ignorant, half-educated lads, called the "King's Curates," were appointed to the vacant charges.

"They were the worst preachers I ever heard," said Burnet, the historian; "they were ignorant to a reproach, and many of them were openly vicious. They were a disgrace to orders, and the sacred functions; and were indeed the dregs and refuse of the northern parts."

"A sort of young lads, unstudied and unbred, who had all the properties of Jeroboam's priests," is Kirton's description of them, "and so profane and void of conscience themselves that they believed there were none in any other. . . . A gentleman in the north cursed the Presbyterian ministers because, said he, since they left their churches, we cannot get a lad to keep our cows, they turn all ministers."

Even Lauderdale's own deputy, Sir Robert

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Moray, maintained that it was impossible to support such scandalous men, "unless the greatest part of them could be turned out."

What was the result? Riot in the parishes and no people in the churches to hear the King's Curates. The people had seceded now as well as the ministers. Wise rulers would have learned a lesson from what had happened. But there only followed a handful of Acts, each worse than the other, to coerce the most determined dissenters in the world.

There was *The Bishop's Drag Net*, as it was called, or "An Act against separation and disobedience to ecclesiastical authority"—passed on 10th July 1663. It required that all who refused to attend the parish church should be heavily fined. It even gave power to the Privy Council to inflict corporal punishment as they thought fit. Thus the Covenanters were treated like fractious bairns.

Next came the *Twenty Mile Act* on 13th August of the same year. It required all outed ministers to remove with their whole households twenty miles from their former churches and manses, six miles outside a cathedral city, and three miles from any royal burgh.

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But the ministers and their people refused to be separated. Wherever the ministers preached, in the fields, in glens, on the moorlands, or in a hollow of the hills, there the people followed them and came to worship God. The result was, that all kinds of conventicles, or open-air preachings, began to spring up. These forbidden gatherings were sometimes held in private houses as well as in lonely glens, and among the desolate moss-hags. The Covenanters now began to be known as the Hill Folk, for the Conventicle was their one and only answer to these cruel Acts of the Privy Council.

As might be expected, Parliament next tried to stop these gatherings by passing the *Act against Conventicles* (1670)—surely one of the wickedest of all those conscience-hurting laws. Any preacher who now prayed outside his own family circle was liable to be fined, imprisoned or banished. All who attended these preachers were also to be fined. Even the master or mistress in whose house the conventicle was held was to be fined. The very magistrates of the burgh within whose bounds the meeting was held were to be fined. Worst of all, the minister who was brave enough to preach under these circumstances was to be

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put to death. But anyone who arrested a minister preaching in the fields was to be given a reward of £30. And—if the minister or any of his hearers happened to be killed, a free pardon was to be given to the killer.

Lauderdale, with fiendish glee, called this “a clanking Act.” But Cassillis was so disgusted with it that, true to his Covenanting sympathies, he voted against it. Even the King was shocked with the brutality of the legislation, and told Moray that “bloody laws did no good,” and that “he would never have passed it had he known beforehand.”

In order to make the carrying out of this shameful Act possible, the *Cess Tax* was levied in 1678—“supply for forces to suppress *field conventicles*, £1,800,000 Scots approved.” The money thus raised was to support the military forces required to suppress the conventicles of the Hill Folk.

But the crowning cruelty of this mad attempt to force the people's will and extirpate all dissent was the *Test Act* of 1681. According to this Act, all people in places of office or trust, with the exception of the King's lawful brothers and sons, were to subscribe to the oath without any reser-

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vation of conscience or protest whatsoever. Even suspects were to be prosecuted.

The following is the gist of this soul-insulting Act :

“ I . . . solemnly swear . . . that I own and sincerely profess the true Protestant Religion contained in the Confession of Faith recorded in the first Parliament of King James the Sixth . . . that I shall adhere thereto . . . educate my children therein, and shall never consent to any change or alteration contrary thereunto . . . renounce all such principles . . . inconsistent with the said Protestant Religion and Confession . . . I do affirm and swear . . . that the King’s Majesty is the only supream Governour . . . in all causes ecclesiastical as weill as civil . . . I do utterly renounce and forsake . . . all foreign jurisdictions . . . judge it unlawful . . . to enter into Covenants . . . or to . . . assemble . . . in assemblies, to treat . . . in any matter of State . . . without his Majesty’s special command . . . or to take up arms against the King . . . that there lies no obligation upon me from the National Covenant or the Solemn League and Covenant or any other manner of way whatsoever, to endeavour any alteration or change in the Government either in Church or State . . . I shall with my utmost power defend, assist, and mantein his Majesty’s juris-

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diction foresaid, against all deadly . . . as I shall answer to God. And finally I affirm and swear that this my solemn oath is given . . . without any equivocation, mental reservation, or any manner of evasion whatsoever . . . so help me God."

Such was the hated *Test Act*. Here surely was a Parliamentary Mell to smash the life out of the soul and conscience of the Scots people. A thing impossible as God has made man. Men who thought one way were to be cudgelled into thinking another way. That mistake has made more stramash in history than anything else.

The effect of the *Test Act* was immediate and astounding. The Covenanting preachers became more determined than ever to resist this new insult to their conscience. The Episcopal clergy resented it, and eighty of their number resigned their charges and removed to England rather than take the *Test*. Sir James Dalrymple, President of the Court of Session, afterwards the first Viscount Stair, resigned his post and went to Holland rather than approve of this impossible law. The Earl of Argyll, son of the great marquis, refused it, and in consequence was thrown into Edinburgh Castle. Had he not

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managed to escape in the guise of a page boy—quite an easy exploit for “that little lad” as the Duke of York called him—he would doubtless have kissed the red maiden four years sooner than he did.

The *Test* did more to clinch the Covenant and rouse the country against the Government than any other Act.

In every generation the children imitate their elders. So the boys and girls of Edinburgh played themselves at administering the Test. The reasoning of the Crown lawyers at Argyll's trial was so absurd that the boys of Heriot's Hospital determined to administer the Test in like manner to the dog which guarded the outer gate of the school, because the poor brute held “a public office.” A printed copy of the oath was offered to the dog, but after sniffing at it, the paper was refused. The boys then rubbed it all over with butter and offered it in the form of a roll. The dog took it, licked the butter off and still refused to swallow the Test. After trial the dog was found guilty of “*leiseing-making*,” which was exactly Argyll's sentence. So the poor beast was condemned to death. As they were removing it, a curate passed and asked them

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what ailed them at the dog. They told him that the school dog being in a public office would not take the Test, so they were going to hang him. The curate lost his patience with them, but the boys cried out that he deserved to be hanged more than the tyke itself, for the curate had swallowed what the dog had the sense to refuse. It is pleasant to believe the version of the story which relates that the dog slipped the halter at the last.

The students of Edinburgh University carried in procession on Christmas night an effigy of the Pope in full canonicals. At the head of Blackfriars Wynd they burned the effigy. When one of them was arrested, George Ridpath, they threatened the Town Council that they would burn down the Provost's house at Priestfield. It was actually burned down on 11th January by someone unknown. The College was immediately closed until further notice, and all the students were ordered to retire fifteen miles from the city. Then, on 1st February, the Privy Council passed an Act requiring all students to keep the peace, to take the oath of allegiance, and to attend church under the eye of the Principal and Regents.

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The same thing happened in Glasgow, where the students put on favours and wore ribbons to show that they were protestors. For this they were called before the Bishop and Masters. One student, afterwards the Marquis of Annandale, was rebuked because he only called the Bishop Sir.

“William,” said his regent, “do you not understand whom you are speaking to? He is a greater person than yourself.”

“I know,” replied young Annandale, “that the King has made him a spiritual lord; but I know likewise that the piper of Arbroath’s son and my father’s son are not to be compared.”

Thus, the boys and girls reflected the spirit of their fathers in that deadly time, when many a strong man found it hard to laugh, and many a good woman expected Clavers to chap at her door any day.

Man-hunting was the order of the day. When everything failed to drive the people into church against their will, and the Council began at last to realize that these adherents of Knox, Melville and Henderson were men of unconquerable consciences, certain *Indulgences* were offered to the Covenanted folk. Ministers could obtain a

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partial use of their own pulpits if they would subject themselves to the King's authority. As if that old bone of contention had not been the means of dissent and death all the time !

When Charles II. had gone to his account, James VII. of Scotland and II. of England came to the throne. An out-and-out Pope's man, he also insulted the conscience of the Covenanters by offering them the King's licence to preach. But his indulgences were framed far more for the Roman Catholics than for the Presbyterians.

For example, the Romanists got leave to erect places of worship if only they reported them to the magistrates. In November the Roman "ornamenta"—a popish altar, vestments, images, and priests—arrived at Leith in the King's yacht for service in the chapel at Holyrood Palace. On St Andrew's Day, the chapel was rededicated according to the Roman ritual for the use of the Knights of the Thistle.

But more significant still, a printing-press was set up, with a shop for James Watson, the popish printer, in the outer court of the palace. James Watson and his successor, Peter Bruce, were granted special privileges. The Privy Council unblushingly demanded that other booksellers

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and printers "should declare on oath what books they kept and sold," but "James Watson, the popish printer, is exempt from this Act."

The clock had indeed been put a long way back in Scotland, when the Truth was only to be printed according to the will of James II., King of England, under the supervision of priests.

These facts are more eloquent than volumes of Acts of Parliament or ecclesiastical papers. They prove conclusively that the old combine of a Stuart King and a Pope at Rome was still a deadly menace to the outlawed Covenanters who had to skulk in caves and moss-hags for fear of getting a bullet through their brains.

Even in the year 1687 the end of blood and persecution was not yet. But the dawn of a better day was drawing very near.

CHAPTER XII

THE BATTLE OF RULLION GREEN—A DEFEAT

THE Covenanters protested, first of all, by words, and Covenants and Bonds. Then they emphasized their protests by deeds when they sacrificed their money, their homes, and their kirks. Finally, when the civil authorities began to coerce them by torture, fire, sword, and scaffold, the people of Scotland rose up in wrath and fought.

On the 13th day of November 1666, four stout Galloway men of the Covenant were making their way to the little clachan of Dalry at the risk of their lives. Sir James Turner was just then making life impossible for any adherent of the Covenanted faith in Galloway. These men had been hiding among the hills, but the bitter weather had driven them down to the clachan in search of food. One of them was Maclellan of Barscobe, a little property in the parish of Balmaclellan, not far to the west of this same St John's Town of

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Dalry. When the four men reached the village, they saw a corporal and a few soldiers driving before them "a company of poor neighbours" to thresh the corn of an old man called Grier, that they might provide money to pay his fine for non-attendance at church. The four Covenanters passed on in silence and sat down to breakfast in the village alehouse.

Just then there came a cry from the village street that Grier had been caught. His captors had bound him, and were even now "threatening to strip him naked, and set him on a hot grid-iron, because he could not pay his church fines." It was too much for Barscobe and his friends.

"Why do you use the honest man so?" said he.

"How dare you challenge us?" was the reply.

Angry words followed. Then the clash of steel on steel. One of Barscobe's company fired his pistol, having loaded it with the broken bits of his tobacco pipe, and Corporal Deanes lay wounded beside the old man.

That pistol shot began the active rebellion of the Covenanters which culminated in the Pentland Rising. The ten pieces of "tobacco stopple" which entered the body of a corporal made a very

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primitive kind of shot. But it was typical of the primitive army it was to recruit.

The rest followed very quickly. These four men, having drawn blood, continued in arms. Their numbers grew from less to more. They captured one band of soldiers after another. At Irongray Kirk, on the 15th of the same month, there gathered a regular army of covenanted men who were willing to fight—fifty horse and about two hundred foot.

Meantime, the dutiful Corporal Deane had ridden into Dumfries and shown his wounds to Sir James Turner, who was at that moment indisposed and confined to bed. An order was sent round the country to collect the various companies of soldiers, but before they could arrive, the first Covenanting army had marched across the ancient bridge of Devorgilla and actually taken the town.

The noise of the army roused Turner from his sleep. He rubbed his eyes, got up, and looked out at the crowded street.

“What means this rabble?” he cried.

“Surrender or die!” came the astounding answer.

Almost before he was properly awake, the

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haughty Royalist found himself riding on a little horse in his night clothes—"nightgown, night-cap, drawers, and socks"—a prisoner in the rear of the army of rebels.

They were, however, very good to him, as he assures us in his memoirs, and his chief complaint was "with the tediousness and impertinences of their graces." They restored his clothes, and although he was a prisoner with the Covenanting army during the whole march to Rullion Green, thirteen days in all, not a rough hand was laid upon him.

John Welsh of Irongray sometimes dealt with him and prayed, if by any means he might lead the rough soldier to a knowledge of the truth.

"To what they spoke of my conversion I said, it wold be hard to turne a Turner."

Larger and larger grew the army as they trekked by Dalry, Carsphairn, Dalmellington, and Tarbolton to the town of Ayr. Rain, frost, and snow turned the roads into quagmires. But at Ayr the numbers swelled to seven hundred.

At Ayr, Colonel Wallace of Auchans took command, an old campaigner in the civil wars, and a former colonel of foot guards. He was a

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good man to the core, and an able soldier. Other trained officers under him were Major Learmont, Captain Arnot, and Captain Paton of Meadowhead. These three officers had fought side by side with Dalyell at Worcester. Maclellan of Barscobe and Neilson of Corsock were also of the number of those who led.

The march was continued by Coylton, Ochiltree, Cumnock, and Muirkirk to Lesmahagow. Here Turner saw the army drilled.

“I saw tuo of their troopes skirmish against other tuo, which I confesse they did handsomelie. I wondered at the agilitie of both horse and rider, and how they had come to that perfection in so short a time.”

At Lanark the numbers reached twelve hundred. The Government was indignant at the rebellion, and Dalyell of Binns was ordered to march immediately from Edinburgh to the west in order to checkmate these soldiers of the Covenant. From Glasgow he marched to Kilmarnock, then by Strathaven to Lanark, where he found them already on the way to Bathgate. After that it was a chase all the way to the Pentlands.

The rain and frost made terrible going for

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the ill-clad and poorly accoutred army of the Covenant. One disappointment followed on another. Two hundred lost heart and turned back. Even Alexander Peden could not see his way to continue. Others, however, were so fearful of being unfaithful that they tied themselves together. Through the "pitiful broken moores" they marched to Bathgate, as they had plunged bravely over the bogs of Ayrsmoss to the Moor Kirk of Kyle. "I never sawe lustier fellows," says Turner, "than these foote were or better marchers." Many of these men had little else than a sword, a musket, a pike, a scythe, or a pitchfork, while others had "staves, great and long."

They had been promised help from the Lothians, but none was forthcoming. Their eyes were now open, but their hearts were unafraid, even although they must have known by this time that there was no hope of victory.

In this case they came to Colinton Kirk. In the kirkyard, amid the frosted graves, they made a miserable bivouac, while a message came from Dalryell assuring them that he would not proceed to extremities unless this chance of accommoda-

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tion was absolutely rejected. This action of Dalyell's was wholly unauthorised. The petition which the Covenanters sent in reply he forwarded to the Privy Council. But the Council answered that they were in "no ways satisfied."

So the die was cast. On the morning of the 28th, "a fair frosty day," this strange nondescript army of brave men swung round the hill foots by Dreghorn and Swanston to the old market stance of Rullion Green, above Flotterstone Bridge. Here many a ragged *rullion*, or tousy character had attended the markets of House of Muir—a market that was even then a hundred years old.

Meanwhile Dalyell of Binns made haste over the hills by the drove road from Currie through the Maiden's Cleuch, past Kirkton and St Catherine's Chapel, which is now submerged by the waters of Glencorse Reservoir. He spied the little army of nine hundred starved but determined men waiting on the slopes to face his three thousand well-fed regulars.

The Covenanters had been drawn up on the hillside with great foresight and strategy. Colonel Wallace placed his infantry on the high ground, with Barscobe's Horse on his right and Lear-

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mont's Horse on his left. A whole wilderness of moors lay behind them to which they could escape in case of defeat. For a defensive battle the position chosen was excellent, because it could only be reached by a steep ascent.

The hills echoed and re-echoed with a strange sound ere the fight began—for the Covenanters sang the 71st and 78th Psalms, and the sound of a prayer followed the sacred songs.

Then the fight began in the afternoon. Twice the King's troops attacked up the difficult slope, and twice they were driven back. Saddles were emptied, and John Cruickshank and Andrew M'Cormick—two fighting ministers from Ireland—lay dead. But when the gathering dusk was falling, the whole weight of the Government troops was hurled against the Covenanters.

Never did men put up a braver fight. They fought bravely as long as it was possible to hold back their enemies. But it was hopeless from the first.

“Being oppressed with multitude,” wrote Colonel Wallace afterwards, “we were beaten back, and the enemy coming in so full a body . . . every man runs for his own safety.”

Three days after, an Edinburgh news-writer

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reported : “ The army say they never saw men fight more gallantly than the rebels, nor endure more ; the General was forced to use stratagem to defeat them.”

For every man in every age is thrilled by the spectacle of a little army of determined men facing a great army and attempting the impossible in the face of death, that they may defend a splendid cause in which they believe.

When the wintry sunset died away, fifty Covenanters lay dead on the frosty hillside, and eighty were taken prisoners. The rest escaped over the moors and hills. All through that night, silent figures were hurrying on foot or on horseback, seeking shelter.

The aftermath of Pentland had its own glories.

See that big, broad-shouldered, lion-hearted man—Captain John Paton of Meadowhead—galloping off on his horse with three troopers thundering after him at the command of Dalzell. The soldiers ride so fast that they are soon up with him. One of them even tries to catch his flying cloak. In front of them is a wide treacherous pool from which three Covenanters have just pulled their ponies.

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“What will he do now?” cried one of the troopers in glee.

But John Paton put his great horse at the pool. A mighty leap, and both are over. A swing round. A sword flash. The head of the first dragoon is split. The other two come tumbling over on the horse and body of their dead comrade, until the pool is a death-pit, hottering with horses and men.

“Take my compliments to your master,” cried John Paton, “and tell him I cannot sup with him to-night.”

And he galloped away in the darkness with a thunder of hoofs on the hill.

Twelve miles over the hills to the west, there stands to-day on Blacklaw Hill a Covenanter's grave. Wounded and weary, this nameless fugitive was making his way home to Ayrshire from Rullion Green. But his strength failed him. He came to the farm of Adam Sanderson of Blackhill in the dead of night, but refused shelter, lest his presence in the house might compromise the family if the dragoons arrived. So, after refreshing the fugitive, Adam Sanderson took him to a place of shelter under an oak bush

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near the West Water. There the wounded Covenanter died. But, with his last breath he said :

“ Bury me somewhere within sight of my Ayrshire hills ! ”

So Sanderson buried him on the spot where the present tombstone stands, and from this 1300-foot stance on the hillside you can just catch a glimpse of the dim blue hills of Ayr, twenty miles away.

Sitting here, in solitude, on a summer's day, with the wind singing soft songs of memory in the heather, the whole heroic story of Rullion Green rushes through the heart while we read the legend on the weather-beaten stone which faces the west :

“ Sacred to the memory of a Covenanter, who fought and was wounded at Rullion Green, November 28th, 1666, and who died at Oaken Bush the day after the battle, and was buried here by Adam Sanderson of Blackhill.”

And what of that sinister soul, James Sharp, Archbishop of St Andrews and President of the Council in Edinburgh? This was his commentary on Rullion Green: “ God keep us thankful

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and give us hearts to improve this so seasonable a mercy ” ; while he assured the King that only the coming of darkness prevented the extermination of the rebels.

Rather let us turn to that great Christian and excellent soldier—Colonel James Wallace of Auchans, who commanded the gallant band at Pentland. He fled to the Continent, where he was pursued from place to place by Charles’s ministers. By the influence of Sharp the King requested the States General to remove James Wallace, Robert McWard, and John Brown out of their province. But the Dutch ministers refused. It is McWard who gives us in his letters some account of how Colonel Wallace lived and died in exile.

“ The most faithful, feckful, compassionate, diligent, and indefatigable elder in the work of the Lord ”—“ If the cause for which he had suffered was mentioned, when it was scarce believed he understood or could speak, there was a sunshine of serene joy looked out of his countenance, and a raising of hands on high as to receive the confessor’s crown, together with a lifting up of the voice with an Aha, as to sing the conqueror’s song of victory.”

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So, James Wallace of Auchans, in the shire of Ayr, finished his course far away from the westland winds of home, having fought his battles and given his sword to another.

CHAPTER XIII

LITTLE BEATRIX UMPHERSTON AND THE CHILDREN'S BOND

THERE is a little old-world God's acre outside of Edinburgh, near the village of Pentland. It lies beneath the shadow of a red blaes bing, but its graves look towards the steep slopes of Caerketton Hill. The whole world flies past old Pentland Churchyard to-day on the highroad yonder along the hill foots, and few ever come here to dream among the graves.

And yet it is a sanctuary secure, on a May-day afternoon, when the air is melodious with the song of larks, soaring above the braided fields. There is a steep grass-grown approach, a row of ancient yew trees, the stately tomb of the Gibsons of Pentland, a handful of graves, cowslips growing among the long grass, and an unspoiled view of the green Pentlands through the trees.

The wind that stirs the yew trees and rustles

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through the sunlit grass seems to bring a sough of the Covenant to those who love this secluded spot. For here is the gravestone of little Beatrix Umpherston.

Why should this grave interest us ?

Because in the year 1683, when Beatrix, or Beterick, Umpherston was a little girl of ten years of age, she, along with other fourteen girls, her companions in Pentland village, signed a Covenant which is now known in history as the *Children's Bond*.

Here are the very words of this touching covenant of childhood :

“ This is a Covenant made between the Lord and us, with our whole hearts, and to give up ourselves freely to him, without reserve, soul and body, hearts and affections, to be his children, and him to be our God and Father, if it please the holy Lord to send His gospel to the land again : that we stand to this Covenant which we have written, between the Lord and us, as we shall answer at the great day : that we shall never break this Covenant which we have made between the Lord and us : that we shall stand to this Covenant which we have made : and if not, it shall be a witness against us in the great day, when we shall stand before the Lord and his holy angels. O Lord give us real grace in our

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hearts to mind Zion's breaches, that is in such a low case this day : and make us to mourn with her, for thou hast said, ' them that mourn with her in the time of her trouble shall rejoice when she rejoiceth, when the Lord will come and bring back the captivity of Zion ' ; when he shall deliver her out of her enemies' hands, when her King shall come and raise her from the dust, in spite of all her enemies that will oppose her, either devils or men. That thus they have banished her King, Christ, out of the land, yet he will arise and avenge his children's blood, at her enemies' hands, which cruel murderers have shed."

On the back of this document was written :

" Them that will not stand to every article of this Covenant which we have made betwixt the Lord and us, that they shall not go to the kirk to hear any of these soul-murdering curates, we will neither speak nor converse with them. Any that breaks this Covenant they shall never come into our society. We shall declare before the Lord that we have bound ourselves in covenant, to be covenanted to Him all the days of our life, to be his children and him our covenanted Father.

" We subscribe with our hands these presents—

BETERICK UMPHERSTON	MARGARET GALLOWAY
JANET BROWN	HELEN STRAITON

LITTLE BEATRIX UMPHERSTON

HELEN MOUTRAY

MARION SWAN

JANET SWAN

ISOBEL CRAIG

MARTHA LOGAN

HELEN CLARK

MARGARET BROWN

JANET BROWN

MARION M'MOREN

CHRISTIAN LAURIE

AGNES AITKEN ”

It will never now be known who drew up this sweet and serious children's Bond. There are one or two expressions in it which seem full of a too elderly solemnity. But these children lived in households where the talk was all of Covenants. Like the children of to-day, they would act and behave and speak after the manner of their fathers and mothers. So we need not be surprised if they used such expressions as “the breaches of Zion.” Rather do the oft-repeated phrase “made between the Lord and us”; the delightfully serious expressions “either devils or men” and “soul-murdering curates”; and that truly natural saying of children in every generation, “we will neither speak nor converse with them”—all point to the fact that this was a genuine document composed and written by one or more of the fifteen little girls who signed it.

What serious times for children to live in, the

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years of the Covenant must have been ! They were born and bred in an atmosphere of bonds and blood, prayer and faith, martyrs and field-preachings. The very sight of a soldier must have struck terror into their souls.

Societies for prayer sprang up all over the land. These Societies were banded together by continual correspondence. For from 1660 until the Revolution, it was a dangerous thing for any man to make any public appearance or to take any action as a Covenanter without having the general body of his fellows behind him. So, eventually, a union took place of the United Societies. Great care was taken against the entrance of any spies who might give secret information to the authorities about gatherings for prayer. Applicants for admission had to answer a series of queries. Various sets of these queries were used, but the most popular set was drawn up by that youthful field preacher, James Renwick, the last martyr.

Letters passed between these Societies for praise and prayer, and the Reformed Church in Holland. Sir Robert Hamilton and Alexander Gordon of Earlston kept up a correspondence between the two countries, and Gordon tells us that in 1683—the very year in which the



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Children's Bond was drawn up—there were eighty such Societies with a membership of seventy thousand souls.

With executions going on continually in Edinburgh, where every child was familiar with the sight of the gallows, and with praying Societies meeting everywhere among the hills, the children of Scotland must have breathed the atmosphere of the Covenant continually. Every man who knocked at a cottage door in the country would be a possible Covenanter or malignant. Each little group of horsemen on the hill would strike children dumb with wonder if not with fear.

How very naturally, then, would these little girls of Pentland meet together, as their fathers and mothers did, to pray, to bind themselves in solemn Covenant, and to give themselves up freely to the Lord “without reserve, soul and body, hearts and affections, to be his children !”

What became of little Beatrix Umpherston when she grew up?

The headstone that bears her name bears also the name of her good man, Rev. John McNeill, preacher in Loanhead.

Her father, Charles Umpherston, died in 1681, and her mother—Helen Alexander—married for

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her second husband James Currie, a merchant in Loanhead, who himself suffered imprisonment for the Covenant. He was known in his later years as James Epitaph Currie, because in 1706 he erected the first martyrs' monument in Edinburgh. All these names are on the Umpherston and Currie tombstones in the old kirkyard.

Beatrix herself died in her ninetieth year, an old woman of the Covenant, if ever there was one.

But as we sit in the sunshine among the cowslips, with our eyes lifted to the everlasting hills, it is not old Mistress McNeill in her ninetieth year that we see, but Beatrix Umpherston, the little girl of ten, signing her name on the new-writ parchment of the *Children's Bond*, while other fourteen little girls of Pentland, her companions, solemnly look on as they await their turn.

CHAPTER XIV

RICHARD CAMERON, THE LION OF THE COVENANT

FEW Scots, with the blood of the Covenant in their veins, can pass up the Water of Ayr from the old bridge at Sorn to Greenock Mains, on their way to Muirkirk and Douglas, without casting many a look of love upon the long flat wastes of Ayrsmoss and thinking of Richard Cameron, the Lion of the Covenant. No man goes down in history with the name of Lion-hearted without good reason.

“In that sun-blink day of power,” said Patrick Walker, “when the net of the Gospel was let down at the right side of the ship, a great draught of perishing souls was effectually caught.”

One of these souls was Richard Cameron, a lad belonging to Falkland in Fife, where his father was a merchant. After passing his proper course of learning, Richard Cameron became

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schoolmaster and precentor to the curate of Falkland. Here he sometimes went to hear the Gospel preached in the fields by the Covenanted ministers. It was while attending some of these field-preachings that he discovered the iniquity of the Indulgence.

So he left Falkland and went to the Border Land, where he became private chaplain to Sir Walter Scott of Harden. But while staying in the house of that namely borderer, he refused to go to hear the indulged clergyman, and this set her ladyship against the family tutor. So they had to twine.

Then began the evolving of God's purpose in Richard Cameron, the lad who began life with a quiet and meek spirit, but who was yet to become a godly lion-heart. From Harden he went still farther west and met that famous minister of the Covenant—John Welsh of Irongray. Welsh, with the eye of a prophet, saw in Richard Cameron not only godliness, but great gifts and learning. The minister of Irongray and some others persuaded him to take licence as a preacher, which Cameron with some reluctance did. They sent him straightway into Annandale to preach, but, Moses-like, Cameron,

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who was still young and fearful, doubted his powers.

“How can I go there? I know not what sort of people they be.”

But the iron had long since entered into John Welsh’s soul.

“Go your way, Ritchie; set the fire of hell to their tail.”

From that day it was the habit to call Cameron by the affectionate name of Ritchie.

He now preached up and down Annandale and Ayrshire. At Maybole, many thousands came to hear the Word, and it is recorded that here, for the first time, the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was celebrated in the open fields.

But God’s fire had not yet forged the iron in the young enthusiastic soul. There arose among the more moderate ministers of Cameron’s acquaintance murmurings as to his bitter denunciation of the Indulgence. He attended a conference at Sundaywell, between Dunscore and Craigenputtock. Poor Ritchie! There must have been many another like him, caught in the dilemma betwixt conscience and expedience, in that soul-torturing time. So, being induced to give a promise, or being advised to speak less

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boldly, he grew melancholy and heavy-hearted, because he could not declare the whole counsel of God.

To get the time of this perplexity over, he went to Holland in May of the year 1679. The time spent there with Robert M'Ward and other banished preachers was like St Paul's time of exile in the deserts of Arabia. His soul was searched through and through. The Scots Kirk in Rotterdam was the Holy of Holies to him. By and by he was ordained at the hands of Robert M'Ward, John Brown and a Dutch divine called Koelman.

On that solemn occasion, M'Ward said to Cameron :

“ Richard, the public standard of the Gospel is fallen in Scotland, and if I know anything of the mind of the Lord, ye are called to undergo your trials before us, and go home and lift the fallen standard, and display it publicly before the world.”

When Brown and Koelman lifted their ordaining hands from the head of Richard Cameron, M'Ward still kept his on the light brown curls.

“ Behold ! ” he cried, “ all ye beholders, here is the head of a faithful minister and servant of

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Jesus Christ, who shall lose the same for his master's interest ; and it shall be set up before sun and moon in the publick view of the world."

A weird ordaining, and a doleful prophecy for the young preacher.

But God's iron now entered into Ritchie's soul. He returned to Scotland in October 1679 to find the country seething with discontent, and within nine months M'Ward's prophecy was fulfilled.

What a lion-heart Richard Cameron was during these nine months ! This fiery zealot of a Celt will always remain young. He was little over thirty when he died. Sometimes he carried the Fiery Cross of Jesus on the moors all alone. Sometimes he was helped by others like Cargill and Douglas. But always he was the burning messenger of Christ, with eyes glowing as he looked at the Ideal, being all for the Cause and all against its enemies.

Up and down Clydesdale and Ayrshire he travelled, persuading men of Christ, with a hot hunger in his heart. Once at the close of a sermon his strong emotion overcame him and he fell into "a rap of calm weeping," the conventiclors weeping with him. He was as one

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who was *fey* with the approach of death. At the Mungo Hill of Eaglesham, on the bleak moss of Darmead between Lothian and Clydesdale, at Knype Water, at Carluke—in all these solitudes Ritchie persuaded men and promised them a sweet cross.

But, for this glorious rebel of conscience the time was very short. He not only preached Christ, but he condemned the King without fear. Let us now go to Sanquhar that we may see the Lion of the Covenant at his best.

Richard Cameron was the author of the *Sanquhar Declaration*, one of the many bonds of faith or protests drawn up by the Covenanters.

It was a fair June day of the year 1680. The little town of Sanquhar was beaking in the sun. All of a sudden the douce indwellers were startled at the sound of clattering hoofs. Twenty horsemen were riding down the street, with swords drawn and pistols cocked. Richard Cameron was at their head. The burgh bairns and old folks crowded to the cross to see what great fracas was on. For the horsemen were now drawn up in a cordon about the market cross.

“It’s Ritchie! It’s Ritchie and his men!” said one to another in the crowd.

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Richard Cameron and his brother Michael dismounted. A Psalm was given out. Was it “ Now Israel may say ” that these stern men sang ? With heads uncovered a prayer was said. Then Michael Cameron read a paper—now known in Scots history as *The Sanguhar Declaration*—a document that was to have a momentous effect on the Cause of the Covenant in Scotland. And little wonder. It disowned the King, and declared open warfare on him, because he was “ a Tyrant and Usurper.”

The document was styled : “ The Declaration and Testimony of the True Presbyterian, Anti-Prelatik, and Anti-Erastian, Persecuted Party in Scotland ” ; and it declared that they as a loyal and Covenanted nation “ disown Charles Stuart, who hath been reigning, or rather (we may say) tyrannizing on the Throne of Scotland . . . under the Standard of Christ, Captain of Salvation, we declare War against such a Tyrant and Usurper, and all the men of his practices, as enemies to our Lord Jesus Christ, His Cause and Covenants . . . and against all such as . . . have acknowledged him.” The last paragraph ran as follows : “ Rewarding those that are against us as they have done to us.”

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Here was war to the knife. Every man who signed that Declaration, or approved of it, made himself an open enemy of the King.

Michael Cameron having read it, "One Campbell" nailed it to the market cross. Another prayer was offered. The Blue Banner was unfurled again. The twenty-one horsemen formed up, and clattered once more along the street between the two rows of thatched cottages. They were now open rebels, so they made for the moors. Every one of these men had signed his death-warrant. It was certain that no mercy would be shown to them. Nor did they expect any.

How did the end come to Richard Cameron? This man, with a zealot's conception of Protestantism, put a spell on the hill folk. He spoke to them as an out-and-out crusader of Christ. As a consequence of his action at Sanquhar, a proclamation was issued offering 5000 merks for Richard Cameron, dead or alive; 3000 for Cargill, Douglas and Michael Cameron; 1000 for their comrades, dead or alive; and the parishioners of sixteen parishes round Sanquhar were cited to discover the traitors or their friends.

But Ritchie had already made his pact with heaven.

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At a preaching on the Water of Ken in Gallo-way, he told the hill folks that he would never preach again. He spent the last night of his life in the house of William Mitchell of Meadowhead on the Water of Ayr.

On the morning of 22nd of July 1680, when the farmer's daughter brought him water to wash his hands, he said :

“ This is their last washing—I have need to make them clean—for there are many to see them.”

At that the farmer's wife fell aweeping.

“ Weep not for me,” said Ritchie, with an ecstatic look on his face, “ but for yourself and yours, and for the sins of a sinful land. For ye have many melancholy, sorrowful, weary days before you.”

At four o'clock in the afternoon, Bruce of Earlsball and a company of dragoons came on the Cameronians lying at the east end of bleak Ayrsmoss. They were in all a force of sixty-three men, twenty-three horse and forty foot. Escape was impossible. So Hackston of Rathillet posted them in their places. Cameron asked them if they were all willing to fight. All answered “ Ay ”; but especially one, John Gemmil, answered with an emphasis.

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Then Richard Cameron prayed three times.

“O Lord, spare the green and take the ripe.”

With the élan of a fearless fighter, he cried to his brother Michael :

“Come, Michael, let us fight it out to the last. This is the day I have longed for . . . the day that we shall get the crown.”

Then he drew his sword and, like a lion, led on his little band.

He fought desperately but calmly, as one who enjoys the strife. Seated on his white horse, he hacked his way right and left among the dragoons. The horse ran red with blood. He himself was pierced by a score of swords. So he died, like a hero, scattering death among his foes.

The two Camerons and seven of their companions lay dead on the moor. Four prisoners were taken. The fighters on foot escaped.

When it was all over, and Hackston was giving his testimony, this was the Cameronian's verdict on the Royalists :

“The field was theirs, but they paid for it : we compelled them to give us this testimony—that we were resolute and brave.”

The head and hands of Richard Cameron were cut off and carried to Edinburgh in a sack, as

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evidence that Bruce and Ramsay deserved the reward. Bruce got £500 sterling. The dead were buried in the moss where they fell fighting, and to-day the peewees call about the monument which marks the spot.

But Hackston, with his head all slashed and gory, was stripped along with four others. They were all set barefoot on horses and made to ride to Lanark. There, on being questioned, Dalyell of Binns threatened to roast Hackston alive for his unsatisfactory answers. After that, with his wounds scarcely staunch, Hackston, who, like Nicodemus, had come out boldly from his doubts into a fearless defence of his Lord, was thrown into the Tolbooth.

But the soldiers with the sack in which lay the heads and hands of Richard Cameron and John Fowler—whom they had mistaken for Michael Cameron—entered the house of John Arcle in Lanark.

They asked the goodwife if she would buy calves' heads. Then they rolled out the martyrs' heads on the kitchen floor, and played football. John Arcle's wife fainted.

“Tak' up the auld damn'd whig bitch,” they cried.

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But long ere that Ritchie had gained his crown.

In Edinburgh, Hackston declined to submit to the authority of the court, which condemned him to a brutal death. He was drawn on a hurdle to a scaffold between St Giles and the cross. There, his right hand was cut off. An interval was allowed for suffering. Then his left hand was cut off. When both hands were gone, he calmly asked if the feet were to follow. The body was drawn up to the top of the gallows and dropped alive on the stage. The head was cut off, the heart was cut out, the entrails thrown into a fire, and finally the hangman cried :

“ Here is the heart of a traitor ! ”

Several sacks of his remains were then addressed to St Andrews, Glasgow, Leith, and Burntisland.

Thus Hackston of Rathillet, the man who had sat on his white horse on Magus Moor, resolving his doubts, rose nobly above his swithers and his fears.

Burnet, whose information of the execution came from eye-witnesses, wrote his epitaph when he remarked : “ He suffered with a constancy that amazed all people.”

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But what of Richard Cameron's head and hands ?

Old Allan Cameron, his father, had been cast into the Tolbooth prison for holding conventicles in his house at Falkland. There, in the cell, they showed him the head and the hands.

" I ken them, I ken them," moaned the old man, " they are my son's. O Ritchie, Ritchie ! "

Then he took the poor remains on his knee, fondled them, and kissed them. Who shall blame him ?

It was Robert Murray who delivered them first to the Council, and he put the whole biography of Richard Cameron into one word when he said :

" There are the head and the hands of a man who lived praying and preaching, and who died praying and fighting."

The whaups still fly across Ayrs Moss in the twilight, mourning the men of the Covenant who had so often sent the sough of their Psalms down the moorland winds. But, even now, in this pleasant age of ours, when we remember, our hearts are hurt and sore.

CHAPTER XV

JOHN BLACKADDER OF TROQUEER—AND
OTHER OUTED PREACHERS

FIELD-PREACHINGS, praying societies, hunted ministers, and faithful hill folk—that was the atmosphere of the Kirk for a whole generation.

When a great crisis arises it invariably calls forth great men, and many of the very greatest men of the Covenant were preachers who were exiled from their homes and lived like outlaws among the rocks and moss-hags. Hiding by day, and flitting from one shelter to another by night, they preached faithfully to their people wherever a congregation could be gathered. Surely no chapter in the chequered history of the Kirk of Scotland ever yielded such a crop of fearless prophets of the Lord !

There was James Guthrie of Stirling, whom Cromwell spoke of as “ the stout man who could

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not bow,” and whom the malignants of Stirling called Mr Sickerfoot. Not even an invitation from the great Protector could induce James Guthrie to hold parley with him.

Guthrie interviewed Montrose before his death. He denounced Middleton fearlessly from the pulpit. He even tried conclusions with the King himself, using an incisive pen instead of a sharp sword. Prison and martyrdom shook none of his convictions. He tottered along the High Street of Edinburgh at last to the scaffold on which the blood of Argyll was scarcely dry, and from the very steps of death spoke to the people for an hour, “with the composedness of a man who is delivering a sermon,” said Burnet, who was a looker-on.

Ere the hangman turned the ladder, Guthrie lifted the napkin from his own face and uttered this prophetic cry :

“The Covenants ! The Covenants shall yet be Scotland’s reviving.”

There was John Livingstone—that frugal scholar of the Covenant—with a genius for friendship, whose stipend was only £4 a year.

He was one of those who rode all the way to

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London with a copy of the National Covenant for signatures. Airedy he had been outed from his charge at Ancrum, but having disguised himself, he cantered south with the precious document in his saddle-bag, and his bits jingling as gay as any cavalier.

This man of God, who seemed to live on nothing, was a prodigious scholar, and ranks high among the bookmen of the Covenant. He knew Hebrew and Chaldee, “and somewhat also of the Syriac”; he could read and speak Italian, French and Dutch; and he sometimes expounded the Scriptures in Spanish and German! Yet he, too, was banished, and died at Rotterdam.

But let us take a typical prophet of the wind-swept moors—John Blackadder of Troqueer—and we shall learn what life must have been to those fearless preachers of God’s outed folk.

Blackadder of Troqueer, and Welsh of Irongray, the two Johns—their names will for ever be linked together as among the greatest preachers of the Covenant. Troqueer looks across the river Nith to Dumfries, and Irongray lies peacefully on the south side of the River Cluden, about four miles from the county town.

JOHN BLACKADDER OF TROQUEER

The minister of Troqueer came of gentlefolks. He was of that ancient family in Berwickshire which was known in the fifteenth century as the Black Band of Blackadders. They were fell fighters in the Border wars. Old Cuthbert Blackadder and his seven stalwart sons fought in England under the Red Rose at Bosworth Field. But three of them fell with their doughty father, and the other four returned in dool to the Merse. King James gave leave to the living sons to commemorate their gallant dead by wearing henceforth on the family shields a red rose and a white, with this brave word for a motto, "Courage helps fortune."

Two centuries afterwards, John Blackadder of Tulliallan, of the old Black Band stock, went out to fight, not with sword or whinger, but with the Word of God in the Killing Times of the Covenant. The life of this man of chivalry, who was related to some of the greatest families in Scotland, and in whose veins flowed the blood of those who fell at Flodden and others who held high posts in the pre-Reformation Church, reads like a romance.

A patient, resolute, scholarly man, he was settled at Troqueer in 1653 over a wild ungodly

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folk. But if his ancestor, old Cuthbert, the Berwickshire laird, was a captain of the foray, young John of Troqueer was a non-such captain of Christ.

He was minister of Troqueer for nine years, when he was outed with the rest for his adherence to the Covenant. His by-name was "Guess Again," according to Patrick Walker, who tells us that John Blackadder "desired all the wise heads of wit in the world to guess when and how the Lord would turn back our captivity: for himself, he would guess none, for we would all be as men in a dream."

Leaving his wife and family, he found shelter in the house of William Ferguson of Caitloch in Glencairn. Henceforth he was to minister to that wide diocese of faithful folk who were gathered on the moors.

The very Sunday after he left Troqueer, the dragoons clattered up to the little whitewashed manse at two o'clock in the morning, hoping to capture the minister. When they found that he was gone, they wreaked their vengeance upon the innocent wife and children.

The children never forgot the scene—the guards cursing and swearing outby; the soldiers

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inby dragging the wee ones from their beds ; one of the boys peering down through a trap-door in the loft at the roaring scene below, until a soldier seeing him thrust murderously at him and just missed the white face by scarce an inch : stools and chairs broken up and heaped in the yard for a bonfire, while one of the lads held a candle in his father's study and saw the soldiers throw down the books to see if there was any whiggery in them. They stabbed the beds and bedding to make sure that "Guess Again" was not lying concealed. The very hen-roost was raided, and the wanton redcoats thraved the neck of every hen before leaving it dead on the floor.

One of the older boys, a lad of ten, managed to escape in his nightshirt. Being greatly terrified, he set out just as he was and ran all through the night until he reached the "Brigend of Mennihyvie." There, utterly tired out, nobody being yet astir, he climbed to the uppermost step of the village cross and lay down to sleep.

We can well imagine the scene that followed.

An old wife wearing a mutch put her head out at the door and saw the white figure on the steps of the cross.

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“ Save us ! What art thou ? ” said she, going up to him.

“ I am Mr. Blackadder’s son.”

“ O my puir bairn, what brought ye here ? ”

“ There’s a hantle of fearful men with red coats has burnt all our house.”

“ O puir thing ! Come in, and lie down in my warm bed.”

And soon the boy was fast asleep in the bed of the good woman.

The other children were put into cadgers’ creels, and as the evicted family were setting out for Glencairn, one of the children cried out as they were passing through the Brigend of Dumfries :

“ I’m banish’t, I’m banish’t ! ”

“ Who has banish’t ye, my bairn ? ” asked a passer-by.

“ ‘ Byte-the-sheep ’ has banish’t me ! ”

So the little manse with all the precious things that were in it was burned to the ground. The sound of the Psalm would never be heard again round John Blackadder’s family altar at Troqueer. Henceforth he was to be a wanderer.

During his flight, John Blackadder seems to have witnessed the eviction of his friend and neighbour, John Welsh of Irongray.

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Was it wonderful that Welsh, too, was a protestor? He was the son of Josiah Welsh of Templepatrick, grandson of John Welsh of Ayr, and great-grandson of John Knox himself. A sicker soul was the minister of Irongray, who in one of his sermons called the Estates “a drunken Parliament.” When at last he had to go, his weeping people followed him. What a scene was that parting! On the banks of Cluden his horse was waiting for him. In the end, John Welsh had to tear himself from his people, leap on his horse, splash across the stream, and gallop away, the people dashing through the ford after him and following hard on his track until he was out of sight.

John Blackadder, his friend, was just another such. Galloway, Ayrshire, Lanark, the Lothians, Fife, the Borders—he was known in every glen and on every hillside where “the huddled flock of Christ” gathered for prayer and praise. His pony was his constant colleague, for he was an intrepid rider. When it was no longer safe to ride, he would crawl or walk over the peat-bogs from one trysting-place to another.

It was a life of hairbreadth escapes. Once, when sitting in a mist, he heard the voice of

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Clavers commanding his troopers on the moor close by. He sat still and prayed. When the mist cleared, he saw the sun glinting on the soldiers' accoutrements far down the glen.

In spite of all his caution, people seemed to scent out his whereabouts. Once, in Dundonald wood, the crowds sat concealed among the branches of the trees, until the branches gave way with their weight.

At Skeoch Hill, in Irongray, you can still see the Communion Stones. There, in 1678, on this highest bit of moorland, the Sacramental Tables were constructed of four rows of flat irregular blocks of stone, set out in straight lines. At the south end there is a rickle of stones which suggest that here also a Communion Table may have been constructed. About one hundred and twenty communicants could sit down at one time, and it is said that about four thousand took the Sacrament here.

Sentries were posted on every height around this natural amphitheatre. Gordon of Earlston, at the head of the Galloway Horse, stood ready for any surprise. But the soldiers who had spied out the great conventicle were too timid to face such great odds.

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“Videttes and single horsemen were dispatched to various quarters to keep a good look out. . . . After remaining in that defensive posture for three hours, the body of the people dispersed to their quarters, each accompanied with a guard of foot and horse. . . . The people seemed nothing diminished in numbers on account of the alarm, or of the unpropitious state of the weather. The horse and foot as usual, drew round about the congregation, the horse being outermost. Mr. Blackadder closed this day from Heb. xiii. 1, *Let brotherly love continue*. And notwithstanding the alarm, he continued three weeks preaching up and down in that country.”

There you have the atmosphere in which the people worshipped God.

At Paisley, Blackadder preached to twelve hundred souls. At Fenwick he had to lie in hiding for sixteen weeks, at death's door, being worn out with his hardships. We hear of him at Livingstone and Linlithgow. He preached on the snowy moors, having nothing to stand on but a chair brought from a herd's kitchen, while the hill folks pulled bunches of heather to sit on. Yet this good soldier of Christ never

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girmed at Providence. He belonged to the more moderate section of the Presbyterians, and although he disapproved of the Indulgences, he was not quite clear as to armed opposition to the tyranny of the Government. Yet no one suffered more than he from the soldiery.

There is a delightful tradition of John Blackadder in Linlithgowshire.

One day near Torphichen, that sequestered village which is tucked away among a huddle of green hills, he was flying from the horsemen of Dalyell. The going was rough for his little horse, and he overtook a woman running for her life, with a baby wrapped in a plaid.

“What ails ye, my woman?”

“The red coats have killed my man. But they winna get my bairn. O Lord, whither can I flee wi’ him?”

“Hide him in that whin bush and jump up beside me.”

So the bairn was hid. He swung the mother up on the saddle, and galloped off.

They reached a friendly farm. And next morning the woman returned to find her baby asleep—both safe and cosh—in the whin bush.

That very day, John Blackadder held a preach-

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ing on a little green hill near Torphichen. The woman was there with her baby boy. Sentries were posted, and all the baby boys were baptized that day with the name of John, after the preacher. The hill is called Johnshill to this day.

On another occasion, Blackadder was holding a conventicle at the Hill of Beath in Fife. Barscobe and his Galloway Horse were on guard. It was a summer Sunday—the 18th of June 1670. John Dickson was his helper, and the crowd was very great.

A young lieutenant rode up, dismounted, and listened for a time. On attempting to leave, some of Barscobe's men took away his horse. There was a disturbance. The lieutenant lifted his riding-whip, and Barscobe, thinking it was a sword, cried out with a pistol in his hand,

“Rogue, are you drawing?”

John Blackadder came over to them and assured the young man that he was free to stay or go. So the young lieutenant rode away.

But that night the preacher, on riding down late to Queensferry, found that there was no ferry. It was the same at Limekilns. So, being utterly tired out, he rode all through the summer night by Stirling and Linlithgow to Edinburgh,

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arriving there when the reek was rising from the early morning fires. He had not had his clothes off for two nights, had preached all Sunday at Hill of Beath, and had ridden fifty miles.

In the seaport town of Borrowstounness he baptized twenty-six children after preaching. A message came that Dalzell of Binns was on the track of the intrepid Covenanter. John Blackadder was now crippled with rheumatism, but he climbed dykes, and scrambled through hedges from one backyard to another, until he reached the cow parks above the town. There he found shelter in a barn for the night.

His life was one long series of adventures and hairbreadth escapes.

But he was now drawing near to the end of the hazard. His last conventicle was held at Newhouse Moor, near Livingstone, in the year 1681. He also preached in the house of Sir James Stuart of Goodtrees, now called Moredun, within two miles of Edinburgh; and at Southfield, in the parish of Cramond, where about four thousand people, lawyers, advocates, burgesses, soldiers, and common beggars, gathered to hear him. Full of pains and almost blind with constant exposure to the weather and the

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glare of the sun, he retired to a house in Edinburgh.

There, they arrested him, and the Council condemned him to be confined on the Bass Rock. For five weary years he lay in his prison on that famous rock fortress. Bad air, worse water, and want of exercise brought on dysentery and more rheumatism, until the fine frame of this once stalwart Covenanter was reduced to physical wreckage.

He was now an old man of seventy. A petition was drawn up for his release, and granted. The happy news came on 3rd December 1685. But it was too late. John Blackadder had got a greater release than any earthly Council could grant.

To-day, his dust lies, with that of some others who loved the Blue Banner, in a neuk of the old kirkyard beneath Berwick Law, where he awaits the coming of his Lord.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SKIRMISH AT DRUMCLOG—A VICTORY

IF the Covenanters had suffered a severe defeat at Rullion Green in 1666, they gained a complete victory at Drumclog, nearly thirteen years afterwards, on a sunny Sunday, 1st June 1679.

Claverhouse had got word of a great conventicle which was being held that Sunday in the neighbourhood of Darvel. He had just captured John King, a preacher, and fourteen Covenanters at Hamilton, and was now driving them before his soldiers "bound like beasts." He reached Strathaven on the Sunday morning about six o'clock, and gave orders to his men that when they came on the Covenanting congregation near Loudon Hill, no quarter was to be given. But some of his friends warned him that his own troop of one hundred and fifty mounted men might not be a match for so large a number as were gathered

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near Loudon Hill. Claverhouse, however, was an ill man to advise or restrain. So, before setting out on this eight-mile march, he told his men that he would court-martial any who hesitated to obey orders.

The scene of the skirmish lay at High Drumclog, about two miles from Loudon Hill, which dominates the surrounding country. It was an ideal place for a conventicle, with a sloping hillside to accommodate the listeners, and a little bog in front of them.

The peace of God was over the world that June Sunday morning. The Covenanters had been listening for some time to Thomas Douglas preaching, when the silence of the hills was broken by the sharp report of a musket. One of the sentries had seen the approach of Claverhouse and his men, and had given warning. Every eye in the congregation was now turned to the height down which a man was running towards the conventiclers.

Thomas Douglas looked at the running sentry, then at the people, and said :

“ You have got the theory—now for the practice.”

So the fighting-men drew out in order. The

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women and children were sent to the rear, that they might escape over the moors ; and very soon the peaceful congregation was transformed into an army of fifty horsemen and two hundred foot. Some carried swords and firearms, others were only equipped with homely weapons like pitch-forks or pikes.

But there were doughty men among them. Robert Hamilton, son of Sir Thomas Hamilton, although he had no military training, was called upon to lead the Covenanters. David Hackston of Rathillet was there, with John Balfour of Kinloch, Henry Hall of Haughhead, and young William Clelland of Douglas—a born poet and a born soldier, who was afterwards to distinguish himself at Dunkeld. He was, meantime, a student at St Andrews.

Claverhouse had left King and the other prisoners at North Drumclog farm. The Covenanters had just formed up when they saw Graham and his men appearing on the ridge. There they halted. He sent out a flag of truce, but all his terms were spurned. For the Covenanters had resolved, that “for the relief of the prisoners, their own defence, and the defence of the Gospel, they would put their lives in venture, and through

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the Lord's assistance, go and meet the cruel raging enemy."

Both sides had firm standing ground. But "a great gutter, like a stank, being no way to get about it," ran through the boggy land which lay between the two armies.

When the Covenanters took up their position, the first thing they did was to engage in prayer. Then there arose among the hills on that fair Sunday morning the most glorious sound that Scots Presbyterians can ever hear, the sound of a Psalm sung in unison by the strong voices of two hundred and fifty men. It was the 76th Psalm :

"In Judah's land God is well known,
His name's in Israel great,"

and the tune was the weird wail of "Martyrs."

So with a Psalm on their lips and faith in their hearts, the Covenanters went down to meet Claverhouse and his men. What advantage the soldiers had in military training did not count for so much as the knowledge which the Covenanters had of the bog land and the "stank" which separated the two armies.

The soldiers fired first one or two harmless

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volleys. The Covenanters replied. But Claverhouse, in his anxiety to get at close quarters, sent some horsemen to find out a safe crossing through the moss. This was a prime mistake. For the horses got bogged, the riders became alarmed, and the Covenanters, firing calmly, emptied many of the saddles.

The soldiers' muskets were busy, but the firing seems to have been very bad, for we are told that "Clavers was tooming the shot all the time on them."

The Covenanters knew all the ways of the bog and the safe road across the "stank." Balfour with his cavalry and Clelland with his foot slipped across it instantly. This was too much for the dragoons, who had seen their comrades floundering in the bog and falling from their saddles. In panic they turned their horses' heads and galloped away, leaving thirty of their number dead on the field.

Even the women, in their fierce anxiety, had rushed forward to help, and bore away the wounded Covenanters. For Scots blood was on fire that day. Claverhouse saw his mercenaries flying before the fierce onslaught of the hill men. Two of his officers, Captain Blyth and

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Cornet Robert Graham, were shot before his eyes. The rout was complete.

Then Claverhouse himself swung round his horse and, without an effort to rally his men, rode off at top speed after his retreating dragoons.

The farmers pursued him on their heavier horses, but not until he had ridden a mile from High Drumclog did one of them—Thomas Finlay, farmer in Southfield—stab Claverhouse's charger with a pike. The poor brute galloped on to Hillhead before it fell exhausted and disembowelled near what is now called the Trumpeter's Well. Here Claverhouse mounted the horse of his dead trumpeter, and so got away.

John Nisbet of Hardhill rescued King and the group of prisoners who had been driven in bonds before the troopers, and as Claverhouse galloped past, John King cried out :

“ Wilt thou not tarry for afternoon sermon ? ”

But on and on fled Clavers and his men, clattering through Strathaven, pounding along the country roads, and flying through the villages like a glaive of light, until they reached Glasgow at last—a tired, dispirited, broken band of stragglers.

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That night Claverhouse wrote a dispatch to the Earl of Linlithgow, of which the following extracts make a brilliant commentary on Drumclog and on James Graham as a letter-writer :

“ When we came in sight of them drawn up in batell, upon a most advantageous ground, to which there was no coming but through mosses and lakes. They wer not preaching, and had got away all there women and shildring. . . . They resolved a generall engadgment, and imediately advanced with there foot, the horse folowing : they came throught the lotche : . . . they recaived our fyr, and advanced to shok : the first they gave us broght down the Coronet Mr Crafford and Captain Bleith, besides that with a pitchfork they made such an openeing in my rone horse’s belly, that his guts hung out half an elle, and yet, he caryed me aff an myl : which so discouraged our men, that they sustained not the shok, but fell into disorder. . . . What these rogues will dou yet I know not, but the country was flocking to them from all hands. This may be counted the beginning of the rebellion in my opinion. . . . My lord, I am so wearied, and so sleapy, that I have wryton this very confusedly.”

CHAPTER XVII

THE BATTLE OF BOTHWELL BRIG—A TRAGEDY

AFTER the victory at Drumclog, the Covenanters marched to Glasgow. There they gathered fresh recruits, and actually attacked Lord Ross's garrison in the centre of the city. But, as Hamilton had no artillery, the regular soldiers poured a fusillade on the attackers, with the result that many of the insurgents were killed.

The Covenanting army then marched to Hamilton Moor, near Bothwell Brig, where a great encampment was formed. Here they waited for reinforcements and ammunition. To this permanent camping ground new adherents to the Blue Banner poured in. Men came and went at pleasure. Sometimes there were 8000, sometimes only 5000 in camp. It was an undisciplined mob ; and in it there were four distinct sections.

First of all, there were the extreme Cameronians, the victorious men from Drum-

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clog, who were out-and-out opponents of the Government. These were led by Hamilton, Cargill, Douglas and Kemp. Then there were the Moderates, or the more reasonable Presbyterians like John Welsh and John King, to whom many of the men of Carrick, Galloway and Stirlingshire adhered in the hope of restoring spiritual and civil freedom. The third section might be called the Peaceables, for they consisted of a small number of men like John Blackadder and Fraser of Brea, who believed that deliverance would come by patient suffering rather than by any show of violence. But the last section was the worst of all—the ungodly hangers-on, who were there merely to plunder their neighbours and exploit the occasion for their own selfish ends. One man, Alexander MacKinnon, a pipe-maker in Glasgow, after trial had his ears cut off for robbing the ministers ; while another Glasgow ruffian called Watson, a butcher, was shot, because in a passion he stabbed a Covenanter with a pitchfork.

Sir Robert Hamilton of Preston and Fingalton was in command. Gilbert Burnet, who at one time was Hamilton's tutor, predicted of him that he would become " a crack-brained enthusiast "

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—and Burnet was right. Hamilton had for his officers such able men as Major Learmonth, Captain John Paton of Meadowhead, Hackston of Rathillet, Hall, Clelland and Balfour. But here surely was a mistrusted man at the head of a pitifully divided multitude !

If the Covenanters at Bothwell Brig had only stood shoulder to shoulder, and been led by a man who was a born soldier, what might not these thousands have accomplished ! But schism rent them asunder, and so their cause was hopelessly weakened.

If Drumclog, with its victory, was the glory of the Covenant—Bothwell Brig with its dissensions was the tragedy of the Covenant. Thousands of men were in arms, but their leaders were continually quarrelling. Hamilton, with his red-hot denunciation of any who sympathized with the Indulgence, would have expelled altogether from the camp such men as John Welsh of Irongray for his tolerance, and John Blackadder, who held that “the Lord called for a testimony by suffering rather than by outward deliverance.”

So for three weeks the miserable wrangle went on. The camp became a debating society, rather than a disciplined body of fighting-men

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who were preparing themselves for battle. The Moderates were still loyal to the King, but the zealots stood by the Declarations of Sanquhar and Rutherglen. Each newcomer took a side. Many doubted Hamilton's ability as a commander. He was indeed a poor general. But, like many another weak man, he insisted on having his own way, and even dictated what the ministers were to say in their sermons. Thus, untold mischief was done to a good cause. Many went home in grief and dismay. No plan of battle was thought out. No officers were properly appointed to control the quarrelling bands. Retribution was bound to follow. And it did, without any tarrying.

A King's army of 10,000 well-trained regulars under the Duke of Monmouth was already marching on Bothwell Brig. Curiously enough, Dalyell of Binns was somehow overlooked when the officers were chosen, for he arrived with a belated commission in his pocket when the battle was over,

Again it was a Sabbath morn—the 22nd of June, and only three weeks since the victorious skirmish at Drumclog. Across the river Clyde, Monmouth saw 4000 ill-assorted Covenanters

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facing his thoroughly disciplined troops, and must have anticipated a sorry result.

The narrow, steep, old bridge, with its guard-house and toll-bar, was barricaded, and one poor little brass cannon that had been picked up at Douglas Castle was all the artillery the Covenanters could boast of to keep the bridge. They sent across a declaration, under truce, to Monmouth.

“If you disarm,” he replied, “no harshness will be used to you.”

“Yes,” laughed Hamilton, when he received the message, “and we shall be hanged next.”

Monmouth then asked for Hamilton’s ultimatum.

“No surrender,” was the reply.

There was nothing for it then but to fight it out.

But what an unequal struggle was here !

The King’s army was well accoutred and finely officered. The Duke of Montrose was at the head of the cavalry, Graham of Claverhouse was there with his dragoons, while the Earls of Airlie and Hume, with Lord Mar, had their own companies.

Across the bridge the Covenanting army had a

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good position. At Drumclog, the whole body of the hillmen, with hearts beating in unison, worshipped God and sang a Psalm. Here, there was no prayer, no happy concord, no sound of singing. James Ure of Shargartan tells us that no one went through the ranks to see to the proper distribution of powder and shot. Indeed, very few of these countrymen had a second round of ammunition. It was a sorry tale of bungling.

And yet the defence of Bothwell Brig that day by a handful of resolute men makes one of the heroics of the Covenant.

Hackston of Rathillet, Henry Hall, and Turnbull of Beaully, with 300 picked men from Galloway, guarded the bridge all Saturday, and all through the night even to the Sabbath dawn.

In the morning the fight began. That wearied three hundred, with their one little cannon, fought for three hours and kept the bridge against all comers. The bridge was the battle. But when they were like to be worsted the three hundred called back to the thousands to come and help them. There was little or no response.

The gallant little company at the bridge then called for more powder and shot. But there was

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none. Yet, in spite of it all, these brave Galloway men fought on and kept their ground. They begged that, at least, they should not be ordered to retire, choosing rather to die with a stab in the face or a bullet through the heart than to live on dishonoured.

“Retire, retire!” came the order from Hamilton.

So, with broken hearts, Hackston and his men, after thirty hours of continuous duty at the bridge, had to give up their position. The King’s men rushed over. The battle was lost. Did ever brave men get a worse reward?

But the crowning shame of Bothwell Brig was still to come.

A gallant fight might now have been put up by the thousands who still crowded the moor. But suddenly there was a cry—the most terrible cry that can ever be heard on a battlefield. Hamilton, their leader, was in full flight! The first to turn his back on duty and flee, his staff was soon doing the same. The Covenanters were abandoned to death and slaughter. Without striking a single blow, the majority turned round and followed their craven leaders, or gave up their arms and were made prisoners.

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“ After the retreat was sounded,” wrote John Blackadder, “ they fell on taking prisoners, which were above twelve hundred on the place, who were all gathered together about a gallows that stood there, and kept in that place all night (and made to lye flat on their faces on the ground) with a strong guard.”

But when Claverhouse, Major White, and other officers advised Monmouth to put all, or at least a considerable number of, the prisoners to death, that humane cavalier, like a true soldier, refused.

By noontide that day a galloper, called Lundin, had ridden thirty-five miles to Edinburgh with the news.

Alexander Peden, that weird prophet of the Covenant, who was forty miles away from Bothwell Brig at the time, refused to preach, exclaiming, “ Our friends are fallen and fled, before the enemy at Hamiltoun ; they are haggling and hashing them down ; and their blood is running like water.”

And what of the prisoners ? Roped in pairs, and stripped, as was the custom, they were marched all the way to Edinburgh, which they reached on the following Tuesday. It was a

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miserable journey. The very dishes which many a kind-hearted woman held out with food for them as they passed were knocked to pieces by the soldiers. Hungry, thirsty, and fainting, they reached Edinburgh at last.

“Where is your God?” jeered the crowd on their arrival. For to sympathize with them was to come under the lash of the law.

But again Monmouth dealt with them as gently as he could. The prisons were full. So the Covenanters were all penned up in a vacant part of Greyfriars Churchyard, the inner or new yard, which to this day is called “The Covenanters’ Prison.” The wounded were accommodated in “Heriot’s Wark.”

Forty years before that, the National Covenant had been signed with great acclaim in the kirk close by. Now! Twelve hundred Covenanters had to exist in a corner of the kirkyard, through summer heat and winter cold. Ill-clad and ill-fed, their only bed was the damp earth. The sentries robbed them of the food and money which their friends brought in for them. Some escaped. Others were liberated on taking an oath of non-resistance. Many died.

At last, one wintry morning, the 15th of

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November, the two hundred and fifty-seven men who remained were marched down to Leith and put on board a small ship called *The Crown*, which was sailing for the American plantations. There, the prisoners were to be sold as slaves. The hold of the ship could accommodate one hundred comfortably, but all the two hundred and fifty-seven men were thrust into that terrible prison. For twelve days the boat remained at Leith. After other twelve days at sea, they reached an anchorage at Deerness in Orkney.

To let the sick lie down on that foul voyage the strong had to keep standing night and day. The air was poison. Intolerable thirst drove many of them to dreadful extremities.

“All the troubles we met since Bothwell,” wrote James Corson to his wife, “were not to be compared to one day in our present circumstances. Our uneasiness is beyond words. Yet the consolations of God overbalance all, and I hope we are near our port, and heaven is open to us.”

These words were written during the twelve days of waiting in Leith Roads. What, then, must have been the sufferings of these men during

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another twelve days' voyage before they reached Orkney !

But the prisoners on *The Crown* were nearer the heavenly haven than they dreamed.

On 10th December 1680, when the rising storm was driving the vessel ashore on the rocks at Scarvating, not far from Mull Head on the mainland of Orkney, the captain ordered the hatches to be battened down. The ship struck on a rock and was broken in two. When she foundered, forty or fifty of the prisoners got out and either swam or scrambled ashore. But about two hundred were drowned under hatches, like rats in a hole. Only a few of their bodies were washed ashore. When some of the escaped Covenanters were struggling in the water to get on to the rock, the brutal captain and his men struck at them and thrust them back again into the surf. It is a miserable memory of one of the most tragic chapters in the history of the Covenant.

To-day, in far-off Scarvating, by the northern sea, you can look upon a row of green mounds. These are the graves of the buried Covenanters. For them, this was the end of Bothwell Brig. A monument stands at Scarvating to-day, and

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there are those who gather still on that lonely shore by the green graves to worship God with a Psalm and the Word, in memory of the brave martyrs whose sufferings long ago bought for us the freedom which we all enjoy.



THE BATTLE OF BOTHWELL BRIG

CHAPTER XVIII

DONALD CARGILL, THAT SINGULAR CHRISTIAN

DONALD CARGILL, “that blest singular Christian,” was a kindred soul to Richard Cameron.

The Sunday after Ayrsmoss, in the parish of Shotts, he preached what was really Cameron’s funeral sermon from the text : “Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel ? ”

Cameron and Cargill—they might have been brothers. Both began life as rather timid youths ; both became zealots in their later years ; both made Declarations which became historic ; and both suffered martyrdom at last.

Donald Cargill was the youngest son of Laurence Cargill, notary and gentleman of Rattray, in Perthshire. After being licensed by the Presbytery of St Andrews in 1653, he was ordained as successor to the famous Zachary Boyd in the year 1655, in the Barony Kirk of Glasgow—a

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congregation which then met in the crypt of St Mungo's Cathedral. When the Government evicted him from his parish, a storm of protest followed. For Cargill was by nature a timid and shrinking man. Yet—as so often happens with the weak, he became the boldest in the battle when set on fire of Christ. Like Richard Cameron, he trampled on his fears. On the Restoration Day, he declared in the spirit of a fiery prophet that the return of the King was “the woofullest sight that ever the poor Church in Scotland saw. Wo, wo, wo to him; his name shall stink while the world stands, for treachery, tyranny and leachery.”

Then, like Cameron, he became a flying evangelist of Christ on the moors. Heroic, clever, swift of foot and full of a warm affection, he was of those who carried the fiery cross among the Covenanters. He was credited with having the mysterious sense of second sight. He had many marvellous escapes. The more he was hunted, the fiercer became his rebellion against the Civil Power. The Council ordered him to betake himself and his family north of the Tay—an order which he deliberately ignored.

We find him always fitting about with Cameron

DONALD CARGILL

on the borders of Ayrshire, Lanarkshire, and the Lothians. The bleak, desolate moors about Darnead, the wild and lonely Lammermoors, the green hollows of West Lothian, and the old seaport town of Borrowstounness—these were some of his haunts.

He had known the sweets of love for one short year; but twelve months and a day after his marriage, God called home his young wife, Margaret Brown. Thereafter, Cargill was a lonely man, but the heart of the hill folk was with him to the end.

The persecutions of the Government drew forth several Declarations, as we have seen. One of the less important was the *Queensferry Paper*. It was really a precursor of Richard Cameron's *Sanguhar Declaration*, but it was never published by the Covenanters, being simply an unsigned paper, which was stolen from one of them—Henry Hall—after death.

It happened thus, on the 3rd of June 1680. Henry Hall and Donald Cargill had met when hiding about Borrowstounness. In the rising ground to the south of the Kinningars Park, at old Grange, there are several hollow coal-workings or caves which were used as hiding-places

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by the Covenanters. Others may be found in the Carriden woods close by. Here Hall and Cargill probably met. They set out to walk from Borrowstounness to Queensferry; but in passing the manse on the shore, they were spied by the minister of Carriden, John Park, a worthless character who was afterwards deposed for immorality. Park reported them to the merciless Middleton who was governor of Blackness Castle. Middleton followed the two Covenanters, and came upon them in an inn at Queensferry. He pledged them pleasantly with a glass of wine. Then he declared them prisoners, and called in his soldiers.

Hall drew his sword, and the clash of steel began. Hall and Middleton were in the midst of a deadly fight when the waiter felled Hall with a carbine. Cargill was wounded, but escaped on Middleton's horse. At the gate, Hall was rescued by some friendly women, who hid him and dressed his wounds. But Dalzell of Binns ferreted out the dying Covenanter, who, however, expired when the escort was taking him to Edinburgh.

In Hall's pocket or in Cargill's valise was found what was afterwards known as the *Queens-*

DONALD CARGILL

ferry Paper—an unsigned Declaration, calling boldly on the people to overthrow the King, the Government, and the Malignants. This revolutionary paper may have been intended for discussion among the exiles in Holland, who were anxious to draw up the basis of a new Presbyterian system for Scotland. In any case, it was set down to Hall and Cargill. Cargill, who was now nursing his wounds somewhere among the Lammermoor Hills, was himself prepared to sign any Declaration which would deliver the beloved hill folks from the grips of the Government which he hated. Little did he know then, that on the 22nd day of this same June 1680, Richard Cameron was to set the heather on fire with his Declaration at Sanquhar.

We know the tragic aftermath of Sanquhar and Ayrsmoss. But after Cameron's death Cargill was more determined than ever to defy both King and Government. No power on earth could now damp the zeal of this "singular Christian."

On a September day of the same fateful year we find Donald Cargill, recovered of his wounds, at a great gathering at Torwood, on the road between Falkirk and Larbert. He preached from

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the significant text : “ Thus saith the Lord God, remove the diadem and take off the crown.”

At the close of the sermon he excommunicated the King, the Duke of York, the Duke of Monmouth, the Duke of Rothes, the Duke of Lauderdale, Sir George MacKenzie and Sir Thomas Dalrymple of Binns. This was known as the *Torwood Declaration*, and there were some of his brothers in the faith who shook their heads over the wisdom of this rapidly ageing and militant minister of Christ.

But he was the last survivor of those Cameronians whose ministry would brook no half measures and no defection. Now a lonely, hunted, somewhat sad servant of God, he fearlessly declared the judgments of Heaven, and just as deliberately denounced his enemies as they denounced him. A price of five thousand merks was set on his head. But, for yet a while, he was to elude the hands of his would-be captors.

Rather let us remember the softer and more spiritual side of this blest and singular Christian whose soul so often climbed the Delectable Mountains of God.

But Donald Cargill was caught at last. He preached his last sermon on Dunsyre Common,

DONALD CARGILL

and his text was : “ Come, my people, enter into your chambers.” The shadow of death was already upon this brave old campaigner of Christ, and his hinmost sentiments are so beautiful that I give them as Patrick Walker, a hearer, took them down :

“ He insisted what kind of chambers these were of protection and safety, and exhorted us all earnestly to dwell in the cliffs of the rock, to hide ourselves in the wounds of Christ, and to wrap ourselves in the believing application of the promises flowing therefrom : and to make our refuge under the shadow of his wings, until these sad calamities pass over, and the dove come back with the olive leaf in her mouth. These were the last words of his last sermon.”

It is one of the almost fey features of the faith of some of these ecstatic Covenanters that in the end, being oppressed with a sense of certain disaster, they almost welcomed death.

Cargill travelled all that night from Dunsyre towards Tinto Hill. Next morning he was taken at Covington Mill along with Walter Smith, a preacher, and a student called James Boig. Their captor was James Irving of Bonshaw, a horse dealer who made “ a trade of fine horses of

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outfang and infang betwixt the kingdoms.” He had a commission from General Dalyell to spy out Cargill, on whose head was still the reward of 5000 merks. So Irving led a part of Stuart’s dragoons to Covington’s Mill, and when Cargill was taken, the miserable horse dealer exclaimed :

“ O blessed Bonshaw ! and blessed day that ever he was born, that has found such a prize this morning ! ”

In this man’s eyes there was nothing but the glitter of gold.

The three captives were marched hard to Lanark. There, Bonshaw tied Cargill’s feet below the horse’s belly. They rode sixteen miles thus to Glasgow. Then they were hurried on to Edinburgh. At the Council, old Rothes was present, having risen from his death-bed to face the man who had excommunicated him and given him over to the devil. Rothes threatened Cargill with extraordinary tortures. But the old preacher replied with a flash of prophetic fire :

“ Rothes, forbear to threaten me : for, die what death I will, your eyes will not see it.”

And on the very night of the trial, Rothes was on his death-bed.

DONALD CARGILL

At the trial, on July 26th, Cargill, Smith, Boig, William Thomson, a serving-man in Fife, and William Cuthill, a seaman from Borrowstounness, were arraigned together. They were all condemned "to be hanged and hashed" at the market cross next day, three heads to be impaled on the Netherbow, and two on the West Bow.

Roths had just died. But, when in the grip of his death fears, he called for some of his wife's Presbyterian ministers. For, as this frightened soul testified, his own ministers were good to live with, but not to die with. So John Carstares and George Johnston came to deal and pray with him. Roths roared so loudly when under the horrors of conscience, that the nobles left him weeping, and William, Duke of Hamilton, said of the Presbyterian ministers :

"We banish these men from us, and yet, when dying, we call for them : this is melancholy work."

But there was no melancholy in the soul of Donald Cargill when he ascended the scaffold.

"Now," said he, "I am near the possession of my crown, which shall be sure. For I bless the Lord that hath brought me here."

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Then he took his farewells. They fixed his head beside Richard Cameron's, on the Netherbow. So the old saint joined the young enthusiast in the Kingdom of God, where each got his crown.

CHAPTER XIX

MEIKLE JOHN GIBB AND HIS SWEET SINGERS

THE sweet, reasonable, persuasive side of Donald Cargill's character comes out when we remember how patiently he remonstrated with the Gibbites, that fanatical sect which was troubled with "demented, enthusiastical delusions," and which was known everywhere as the Sweet Singers.

These crazy separatists were the followers of John Gibb, a sailor in Borrowstounness, who made a great profession of religion. He drew to himself twenty-six women and three men, who were as fanatical as himself, in the beginning of the year 1681. As Patrick Walker puts it, "The devil began a new project in Borrowstounness."

They believed that the metrical Psalter was a meddling of men with the text of Scripture, and ought to be burned. All catechisms, confessions, covenants, and declarations were the work of

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the devil and ought to be trampled underfoot. Freemen of the Lord, like themselves, ought, therefore, to resist and disobey all persons in authority, like ministers of state or ministers of religion. Steeple houses, as they call churches, ought to be hated, and ale and tobacco ought to be looked upon as wholly evil. No taxes ought to be paid. Such was the mad creed of these demented people.

Believing that only in the desert are men free from the sins and snares of this life, they left their houses, their families, and their occupations and followed Meikle John Gibb, as he was called, to the Pentland Hills. There, some of them resolved that they would remain, singing the dirge-like Psalms—the 74th, 79th, 80th, 83rd, and 137th—until the day came when they would see the bloody city of Edinburgh consumed by fire sent down from heaven. By reason of their continual psalm-singing, they were called the Sweet Singers.

Donald Cargill came upon these fanatics, for the first time, on a Sabbath morning, when John Gibb, David Jamie, Walter Ker, John Young, and twenty-six women were “lying in the Dear-slunk, in the midst of a great flow-moss betwixt Clydes-

MEIKLE JOHN GIBB

dale and Lothian.” He invited them to come and hear sermon. But all in vain. He then went over to them and, with Bible in hand, reasoned and pled with them. Gibb and Jamie were armed with pistols, like buccaneers, and threatened all who came near them to rescue their wives or friends.

A bed was then made in the heather for the Blest Cargill. But, after lying on it for a while, he once more went across the moor to them, and spent the night, in a cold easterly haar, doing his best to persuade the Sweet Singers to return to the plain paths of righteousness. He was still there in the morning, wet and cold and very melancholy. When he was asked what he thought of them, his reply was an admixture of common sense seasoned with much Christian patience :

“ My thoughts are both bad and sad. This man John Gibb is an incarnate devil . . . I bless God who preserved me : he might have cut my throat this night, but I got warning of my danger. As for David Jamie, there is a good scholar lost, and a minister spilt : I have no hope of him. . . . And now, go all home and pray that this snare may be broke ; for this is one of the most dreadful and dangerous snares that hath been in my time :

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but they run so fast they will soon discover themselves."

And so it fell out.

In the beginning of May the Gibbites were all taken by a troop of dragoons at the Woolhill Craigs, or Wolf Craigs, a curious tumble of jagged rocks on the south side of the West Cairn Hill of the Pentlands, near the head waters of the Baddinsgill Burn. Four of the men were put in the Tolbooth and twenty-six women in the Correction House. There, some of them were scourged. "The greater part of them," says Patrick Walker, "came to their right mind, after they had tasted of the bitter fruits of these demented delusions, with whom I have had edifying conversation since."

Gibb was subject to fits of madness which made him roar and blaspheme, while the others prayed. But their first taste of prison did not cure all of them; for, after being liberated, five of them were caught at the Frost Moss, between Airth and Stirling, burning Bibles. Gibb, Jamie, and two women were once more locked up.

When Meikle John Gibb began again in prison with his "groanings and gollerings," he

MEIKLE JOHN GIBB

met his match in a fellow-prisoner—a lythe, young Christian lad, called George Jackson, who afterwards suffered martyrdom on the Gallow Lee. Jackson, who was only eighteen at the time, rammed his napkin into the mouth of the great roarer, knocked his head against the wall, and thrashed him into silence. The Council sent Gibb and Jamie, with two of the women, to America. Meikle John Gibb was much admired by the natives “for his familiar converse with the devil bodily, and offering sacrifices to him.” David Jamie ended his fanatical career in the most commonplace way possible, for he became a clerk in New York.

So ended a mad incident in the Story of the Covenant.

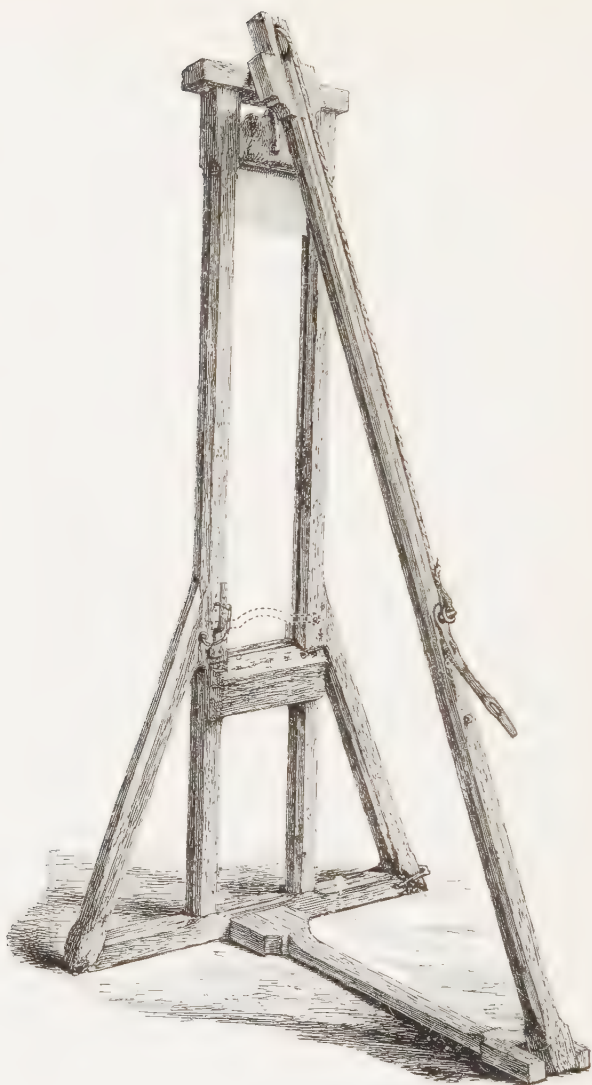
These crazy sectaries are the bane of every good cause. But it would be nothing less than an act of historical injustice to associate the Gibbites with the Covenanters. The Societies at Cairntable in October 1686 denounced the sect, and no more was ever heard of the Sweet Singers. It has already been made abundantly clear that these demented fanatics so disapproved of the Covenants that they burned them. And yet Mr. Andrew Lang asserted that, “on the whole,

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Gibb only went a little further than the other saints.”

Rather let the last word be said by Patrick Walker, who lived in the times of which he wrote, knew personally many of the Covenanters and martyrs, and had not only a shrewd gift of observation but a tenacious memory. With the Gibbites he had even held conversation. This is his concluding remark :

“ Thus, I have given a full and true account of the rise, steps, and monstrous lengths, and frightful end of these Gibbites ; which may be a warning to the present and following ages, to tremble and be afraid of coming under the power of such demented delirious delusions ; and whereby all may see that the man of God (blest Cargill) was not mistaken in all that he did foresee and foretel about them.”



THE MAIDEN

CHAPTER XX

JOHN BROWN OF PRIESTHILL, THE CHRISTIAN CARRIER

It was a hard thing to be young in the Killing Times. Even on the children's faces there was an anxious look. Did not little Beatrix Umpherson, when she was eleven years of age, draw up and sign a Bond with her companions in Pentland? Did not little Emily Geddie, of Hilton, in Fife, form a praying Society for herself and her girl playmates when she was only nine? We can scarce believe that on one occasion the oldest and tallest member was summoned before the Society, with Emily in the Chair—because she had listened to a curate preach; because she had laughed during public prayer; and because she had spoken harshly about some godly folk! And the punishment? She was not allowed to pray with her companions for a month.

O, little children! How little you must have

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laughed, and played, and made merry in those days of dool ; stifling all the happiness which God meant to be yours ; and often mistaking gloom for goodness !

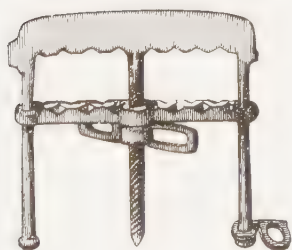
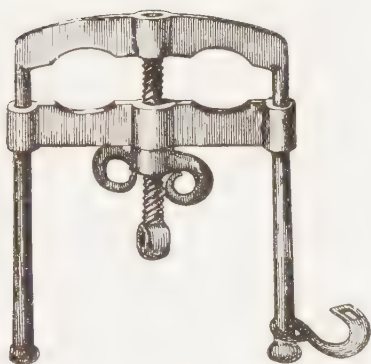
But, if it was an ill thing to be a child in the Killing Times, it was worse to be a bride. The beginning and end of love for many a young wife was the fear of death for her good man.

Here is the tale of a bride who began her wedded life beneath the shadow which never lifted for a moment, but deepened into the darkest night of grief that can ever fall on those who love.

Five miles from Muirkirk stood the little croft of Priesthill. It was a lonely spot. Here in 1685 lived John Brown, a country carrier, with Isobel Weir, his second wife. He was a stout Cameronian, and therefore a marked man.

Alexander Peden married them. But, when the wedding ceremony was over, this was the weird word which Prophet Peden spoke to the young bride :

“ Isobel, you have got a good man—but you will not enjoy him long. Prize his company, and keep linen by you to be his winding-sheet.



THE THUMBSCREWS

JOHN BROWN OF PRIESTHILL

For you will need it, when you are not looking for it, and it will be a bloody one."

Little wonder if Isobel Weir found Priesthill a lonely place by day and an eerie place by night, when her man took his long journeys among the hill folks. There were nights when she would seldom close an eye, so wearing is the foreboding that is akin to love.

But custom takes the edge from the keenest anxiety. It is a May morning again. Peden, an ever-welcome guest at the carrier's house, despite his doleful prediction, had stayed overnight at Priesthill. Ere the sun was up, however, this man, who flitted about Scotland like a shadow, went off into the gloom of the coming day, muttering to himself.

"Poor woman, a fearful morning—a dark misty morning!"

He returned no more.

After family worship, John Brown went out with a spade to cut peats. The mists lay low, and it was an ominous morning. Suddenly there was a jingling of bits and the thud of horses' hoofs. Claverhouse, with three troops of horse, had found him. He was surrounded. When offered the oath Brown refused to take it,

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adding that he knew no King. Indeed, as a strict Cameronian, he was without hope from the beginning.

The country carrier had a stutter in his speech. But, during the examination, he never hesitated for a word. So the little procession came to the door of the poor cottage at Priesthill.

Isobel Weir, the young wife, came to meet them, a baby in her arms, and another child of Brown's by his first wife clinging to her side.

"Go to your prayers," said Claverhouse, "for you shall immediately die."

And John Brown knelt in prayer. While he was praying, Claverhouse interrupted him three times.

"I gave you time to pray, and ye've begun to preach."

"Sir," replied Brown, looking up at him from where he knelt, "ye know neither the nature of preaching nor praying, that calls this preaching."

And he resumed his prayer without confusion.

When the prayer was done, Claverhouse spoke again.

"Take good night of your wife and children."

The carrier went over to his young wife.

JOHN BROWN OF PRIESTHILL

“Now, Isobel, the day is come that I told you would come, when I spake first to you of marrying me.”

“Indeed, John,” replied the brave woman, “I can willingly part with you.”

“That is all I desire,” said he. “I have no more to do but die. I have been in case to meet with death for so many years.”

Then he kissed his children. He kissed his wife, thinking doubtless of the other little one that was about to be born.

Would to God there was nothing else to tell !

“Six muskets cracked,” says Patrick Walker. “The soldiers refused to shoot, and Clavers shot Brown dead with his own hand,” says Wodrow. But all dispute as to what actually happened is at an end when we read in a letter which Claverhouse wrote to the Duke of Queensberry on 3rd May 1685 :

“I caused shoot him dead : which he suffered very unconcernedly.”

For the most part, the shot came upon John Brown’s head, and his brains were scattered on the ground.

“What thinkest of thy husband now, woman?”

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“I thought ever much good of him, and as much now as ever.”

“It were but justice,” he replied, “to lay thee beside him.”

“If ye were permitted,” said Isobel Brown, “I doubt not but that your cruelty would go that length. But how will ye make answer for this morning’s work?”

“To man I can be answerable,” sneered John Graham, whom we may surely call at this moment, with strict justice, the Bloody Clavers, “and for God, I will take him in my own hand.”

Then he rode off.

The young widow was left alone with her bairns and her dead man at her feet. She set down her child. Then she gathered up the dead man’s remains, tied up his head, straightened his body and covered him with her plaid.

There, in that awful solitude which none can ever describe, she sat down by her dead and wept. She waited and wept, waited and wept again, far from her neighbours, a woman distraught with a grief that was like to break her heart.

Later in the day, old Jean Brown came over from Cumberhead—three miles away—to weep with her. Had not she herself lost her own good-

JOHN BROWN OF PRIESTHILL

man at Rullion Green, and her two sons at Drum-clog ?

So, amid the silence of the moors, with only the whaups and peewees calling about them, those two women, one white-headed with age, the other with the comely black head of youth, sat side by side and keened for the dead, each in the deeps of her own Gethsemane.

CHAPTER XXI

THE TWO MARGARETS—DROWNED IN THE SOLWAY SEAS

IN the middle years of the nineteenth century Mark Napier, a staunch Jacobite and admirer of Claverhouse, tried to prove that the two Margarets—Margaret Lachlison, a widow of about sixty, and Margaret Wilson, a girl of eighteen—commonly called the Wigton Martyrs, had never been drowned in the Solway seas. Had he proved his case, succeeding generations of pious Scots would have breathed a prayer of thanksgiving to God.

But, alas ! we know to-day, past all doubting, that the deliberate drowning of these two women in the water of Bladnoch is not only a well-authenticated fact of history, but remains one of the foulest stains on the record of the small group of men who tried them — David Graham, Sheriff (a brother of Claverhouse);

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Robert Grierson of Lag; Major Winram; and Captain Strachan.

Lest the facts are still challenged, let me state them in the briefest catalogue. For history knows no prejudice, and he alone is able to write it whose judgments are built on evidence, not passion.

In his *Case for the Crown*, Mark Napier stated that, outside of Covenanting literature, the Wigton Martyrs never existed. He admitted that the two Margarets had been sentenced to be drowned according to the law, because they adhered to the Declaration of James Renwick. But he maintained that they had petitioned the Government for a reprieve, and that the reprieve had been granted. They were then transferred to the prison at Edinburgh from the prison at Wigton, and, in all probability, were set free.

For this whole theory there is no evidence. The petition referred to was obviously drawn up by Margaret Lachlison's friends, for she could not write; it "discharges the magistrates of Edinburgh" from carrying out the sentence, never mentioning the magistrates of Wigton; and there is a blank space still left for the date.

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There are, however, many facts which go to prove that the two women never left Wigton.

Rev. Archibald Stewart, the parish minister of Glasserton, in his conclusive reply to Mark Napier—*History Vindicated in the Case of the Wigtown Martyrs* (1869)—crowds fact upon fact to prove the truth of the Solway Martyrdom.

What are some of these incontestable facts ?

To begin with, there is the fact that tradition altogether corroborates the martyrdom. Early pamphlets also, like *The Informatory Vindication* of 1686, and *A Hind let Loose* of 1687—to mention only two of a dozen which are cited. The earliest Histories of the period ; like the *Cloud of Witnesses* in 1714, and Defoe's *Memoirs of the Church* in 1717. But most concrete proof of all—extracts from the minutes of Church Courts, such as the Synod of Galloway, the Presbytery of Wigton, and the Kirk Sessions of Kirkinner, Penninghame, and Wigton. Add to these the tombstone in Wigton Churchyard, which was erected to the memory of Margaret Wilson within the lifetime of those who remembered her and the day of the drowning in 1685.

If these arguments are not definite enough, we need only refer to the evidence of Bailie

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McKeand, who was one of those who had “sitten on the seize of these women”; or to that of Elizabeth Milliken, Margaret Lachlison’s daughter; and Thomas Wilson, the brother of Margaret Wilson.

This is not the place to elaborate such controversial arguments, but enough has been said to point anyone who so desires to the reliable proofs of this historical happening.

And the story itself? Would that there was no necessity for telling it.

Margaret Lachlison, aged about sixty, the widow of John Milliken, wright at Drumjargan in the parish of Kirkinner; Margaret Wilson, a girl of eighteen, and her sister Agnes, aged thirteen, the daughters of Gilbert Wilson, a farmer at Glenvernock in the parish of Penninghame; and Margaret Maxwell, a servant in the house of the laird of Barwhinnie—these four were accused of treason for attending Conventicles and for adhering to the Declaration of James Renwick. The elderly widow Lachlison and the two Wilson girls were sentenced to be drowned according to law, and the girl Maxwell was sentenced to be “flogged through the streets of Wigton by the

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public hangman, and thereafter for three days put in the jogs." Gilbert Wilson paid the sum of one hundred pounds sterling for the release of little Agnes, who was then absolved from her dreadful sentence. He then hurried off to Edinburgh to present a petition on behalf of Margaret. This petition has never come to light. Margaret Lachlison could not write, but her kindly neighbours very evidently drew up a petition on her behalf, and this document, referred to above, lies to-day in the Register House at Edinburgh. Before any pardon, however, could reach Wigton, the two Margarets were drowned.

The town folks were all afoot on 11th May 1685. They knew what the turn of the Solway tide would mean that day. Yonder was Grierson of Lag. Major Winram walked near him, with a guard of soldiers. In the middle of the soldiers walked the old woman, Margaret Lachlison, and the young girl, Margaret Wilson. If some one was galloping post haste from Edinburgh with a pardon, the horse and rider did not exist that could reach the town of Wigton in time. The town's folk were tingling with indignation, but

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none durst speak when Lag was present, else it would mean a bullet in the brain. Lag and Winram doubtless thought the women would repent and take the oath when the waters of Bladnoch lapped their lips. But then, as now, a resolute woman is one of God's best arguments for the strength that is made perfect in weakness.

The course of the stream has long since been changed. But in the year 1685 the channel was close to the foot of the hill on which the town stands, and the little ships and gabbarts sailed right up to a point near the site of the present church and churchyard. Then the Bladnoch took a bend seaward and wormed its canal-like way for miles across the sands to the ocean. When the tide turns the sea flows swiftly in over the sand, making the Bladnoch soon overflow its banks.

That dreadful morning two stakes had been driven into the sands within the channel of the stream—one farther out than the other—but both comparatively near the town. To the stake farther out they fastened Margaret Lachlison, the widow, doubtless to intimidate the younger girl, who was tied to the stake nearer the shore. The

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tide was as yet far out, and the people stood waiting, prepared to rescue the two women at the first sign of their relenting.

Then the tide came rushing in with that unrelenting haste which no man can stop. The people retreated up the banks for safety. The water was already lapping about the face of Margaret Lachlison, who was struggling silently in the euthanasia of drowning.

"What think ye of your companion now?" cried some brutal official to Margaret Wilson, who felt the cold waves about her waist.

"What do I see but Christ wrestling out yonder? Think ye that we are the sufferers? No, it is Christ in us."

Then the girl sang part of the Twenty-fifth Psalm, and, opening her Bible, read the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. Finally, she prayed. While she was praying, the water lapped over her face.

It was a brutal tragedy. So let the rest be told in the unvarnished language of Patrick Walker, about whom the compilers of the *Cloud of Witnesses* said that "in some things" his testimony is "not very conveniently exprest."



AN
ACT
Against Preachers
AT
CONVENTICLES,
And these present at Field Conventicles.

AN
ACT
Ancient the
COVENANT.

Edinburgh, May the 8th 1685.

OUR Sovereign Lords, Considering the
Obstinacy of the Fanatical Party,
who notwithstanding all the Laws formerly
made against them; yet they persevere to keep
their House and Field Conventicles, which are
the Nurseries and Rendezvous of Rebellion.
Therefore His Majesty, with Consent of His
Estates in Parliament, Doth Statute and Or-
dain, That all such as shall hereafter Preach
at such Fanatical, House, or Field Conventicles:
As also, such as shall be present as Hearers at
Field Conventicles, shall be punished by Death,
and Confiscation of their Goods.

Edinburgh, May the 8th. 1685.

OUR SOVERAIGN LORD
and Estates of Parliament, do here-
by Declare that the giving or taking of
the National Covenant, as explained in
the Year 1638. or of the League and Co-
venant, so commonly called; or Writing
in defence thereof, or owning of them as
Lawful or Obligatory on themselves, or
others, shall infer the Crime and pains of
Treason.

Printed by the Heir of Andrew Anderson, Printer to the Kings and Sacred Ministry, Anno D. 1685.
Reprinted at London, May the 23d. by George Croome, at the Blue Ball in the new Street, over against Baynard's Castle.

ACT AGAINST CONVENTICLE PREACHERS
AND
ACT DECLARING SUBSCRIPTION OF THE COVENANT TO BE TREASON

THE TWO MARGARETS

“Margaret, ye are young ; if ye’ll pray for the King, we will give you your life.”

She said, “I’ll pray for salvation to all the elect, but the damnation of none.”

They dashed her under the water and pulled her up again.

People looking on, said : “ O Margaret, will ye say it ? ”

She said, “ Lord, give him repentance, forgiveness, and salvation, if it be Thy Holy Will.”

Lag cried, “ Damn’d bitch, we do not want such prayers : tender the oaths to her.”

She said, “ No sinful oaths for me.”

They said, “ To hell with them, to hell with them ; it is o’er good for them ”.

.

When Margaret Wilson was released for that moment to swear the oath, the heart-broken people cried out to Major Winram :

“ She has said it, she has said it ! ”

But to Major Winram the brave girl gave a flat refusal :

“ I will not. I am one of Christ’s children. Let me go.”

It was then that a halberdier cried, “ Tak’

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anither drink, hinny," and thrust her finally under with his halbert.

A wave broke about the stake, and Margaret Wilson spoke no more.

Nineteen years after, a prematurely old, conscience-stricken, unhappy man appeared before the Kirk Session of Wigton, asking for the privilege of the Sacrament, "declaring the grief of his heart that he should have sitten on the seize of these women who were sentenced to die in this place in the year 1685, and that it had been frequently his petition to God for true repentance and forgiveness of that sin." It was Bailie McKeand, who had taken part in the trial of the Wigton Martyrs.

Tradition corroborates fact in this also. For many years after the crime, a broken man might have been seen wandering about the streets of Wigton. He was afflicted with an unquenchable thirst, and dared not walk abroad anywhere without carrying a large jar of water. The good folks of Wigton, who have long memories, both loathed and pitied him. They knew his history, and they never let their eyes rest on that suffering face without hearing a voice—"Be sure your sin

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will find you out." For if God's mercy is great, His judgments are also terrible. The man whose thirst was never slockened was the town's officer who had thrust back Margaret Wilson into the Solway seas, with the words, "Tak' anither drink, hinny ! "

CHAPTER XXII

ANDREW HISLOP, THE LAD WHO LOOKED DEATH IN THE FACE

THE very boys were shot down without pity. A man of cold affections and unnatural punctilios might very well protest to-day that all these executions were within the letter of the law. Granted. But it was an inhuman law that instructed the shooting of a lad in cold blood because out of loyalty to his friends he refused to betray them.

Andrew Hislop, a boy of seventeen, lived with his widowed mother in a cottage at Hutton in Annandale. To this cottage one day came a weary Covenanter who was stricken with a mortal sickness. The kind-hearted woman took the sick man in, and nursed him until he died. It was against the law to shelter any of the hill folk who were in open rebellion against the law. But a warm-hearted woman,

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then or now, will risk anything to succour a dying man.

When this Covenanter died, however, their trouble only began. They had to bury him. With the help of her boys, the kindly widow buried the body under cover of the night in a field nearby the cottage. Well did the little company know, as they buried the stranger, that “reset and converse” with an outed Covenanter was punishable by death.

But the grave somehow was discovered. Word was brought to Sir James Johnstone of Westerhall. He came with a party of his men and unearthed the body in the hope of identifying it. Then, as a punishment for reset, he levelled the widow’s cottage and took away everything in it.

One version of the story relates that while the widow and her sons were all in hiding, Andrew concealed himself in a bush from Claverhouse and the soldiers. The troopers passed by the bush without discovering that he was there. But his dog began to bark and so betrayed his hiding-place. Andrew Hislop was immediately taken prisoner and was brought by Claverhouse to Sir James Johnstone, who was then at Craighaugh in Eskdalemuir.

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No man is ever so rabid as a turncoat, and Sir James had once been a Covenanter. He was anxious to show his loyalty to the King, and here was a chance come to hand. So he at once sentenced this lad of seventeen to death, and Claverhouse was ordered to see to the execution of the law. But it was only ten days since Claverhouse had slaughtered John Brown of Priesthill before his own door. The cold-blooded deed may have haunted him. At any rate, for some reason or another, he urged delay. Westerhall, however, insisted. Claverhouse then ordered the commander of a highland company to shoot the boy. That highland gentleman, however, immediately drew off his men, with a fiery remark :

“ I will fight you and all your men, before I shoot the lad.”

Here was open rebellion. But Claverhouse overlooked it, and being driven by the circumstances, ordered three of his own dragoons to execute the sentence, flinging this reservation at Sir James Johnstone :

“ The blood of this poor lad be on you, Westerhall. I am free of it.”

So the stage was set for one of the foulest of judicial murders. This lad had done no wrong.

ANDREW HISLOP

He had not even been the chief actor in the sheltering of a sick Covenanter. Nor was he responsible for the kindly burial of the stranger whom his mother had taken in and nursed. He was simply one of the household, and he was only seventeen years of age.

So the three muskets were loaded.

Andrew Hislop was allowed a short time for prayer. Then he sang a few verses of the 118th Psalm. The clear voice of this boy singing :

“The mighty Lord is on my side,
I will not be afraid ;
For anything that man can do
I shall not be dismayed,”

must surely have moved some of these rough soldiers to tears, when they thought of their own boys at home.

Then he was ordered to draw his bonnet over his eyes. But he refused.

“I can look you in the face,” said he, “for I have done nothing of which I need be ashamed. But how will you look at the Great Day when you have to answer for what you have done, and are going to do now, when you will be judged by this Book ? ”

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And he held up his Bible before them.

Crack ! crack ! crack ! was the answer he got, as three bullets hit him full in the face.

So died Andrew Hislop, the boy martyr of the Covenant.

CHAPTER XXIII

ALEXANDER PEDEN, GOD'S GANGREL

ALTHOUGH it is three hundred years since Alexander Peden was born, it would ill become us to forget this prince of wandering hillmen whose almost uncanny career will be for ever bound up with the Kirk and the Covenant.

No portrait of Peden exists. Only one hint is given in all the records which would lead us to believe that he must have been a strongly-built Scot. It is when John Clerk of Muirbrook tells us that Peden "laid his heavy hand" upon him.

But if tradition means anything, we can picture this elusive preacher of the moors wrapt to the heel in black, sometimes with a velvet mask over his eyes, grey hair flowing about a pale face, and eyes that were always searching for what other men could not see. The whistle of a whaup or the note of a plover would halt him, apprehensive on the hill. The starlight was his favourite lamp,

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but the sunshine was his fear. But above all the wild things of nature or the sufferings of men, it was always God and the spirit with this man.

For twenty-three years Alexander Peden had to be content with a rock for a pulpit and a moss-hag for a bed. From Galloway and Ayrshire, through the Lothians to the Borders, he kept the dragoons on the trot. Night and day he lived in the open, with his face to the wind and weather, and his heart lifted to the skies. Peden's pulpit, Peden's stone, Peden's bed—you will find them still on the moors of southern Scotland which make the heart of the Grey Mother to every Presbyterian Scot.

Peden's faith in God and his own mother-wit got him out of many a tight corner. He was that most fell of all characters—a practical mystic. Of those who firmly believe that Heaven helps them that help themselves, his adventures to-day read like the finest of fiction. Like all men, who, sleeping or waking, have lived on the edge of death, he was never at a loss, never afraid, never dumbfounded. Cheerfulness and gloom played hide-and-seek in his soul. A man of unearthly foresight, he prophesied a score of happenings that came true. The weird repute of magic clung

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to his quaint personality. None could hold him but God.

Alexander Peden was born about the year 1626, at the house of Auchincloich, in the parish of Sorn, Ayrshire. This little lairdship had apparently been in the hands of a good many Pedens, for as far back as April 1611, Hugh Peden, or Pethin, "was retoured heir of his father Alexander Pethin in Sorn." So the Covenanter was a bonnet laird, a gentleman bred and born, with a respectable ancestry behind him.

After studying at the College of Glasgow, and just before entering the ministry, he became a schoolmaster and the precentor in Tarbolton. At this time, a young woman accused him of her own undoing. Peden was struck dumb with the false accusation, but just when the Presbytery was about to excommunicate him, his innocence was proved by a confession from the real culprit. This was the first of many trials which were to beset Peden. But he never forgot the chagrin of that experience, and he never married.

When at last he appeared before the Presbytery of Biggar on trial for license, he was examined and re-examined no less than five times over, before that august body of ecclesiastics could bring

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themselves to pass him. It is to the "Diary" of Andrew Hay of Czaignethan that we owe this priceless remark on Peden's trial discourse—"it was prettie weel composed but not weel delivered." Then came ordination at the Moor Kirk of Glenluce in Galloway in 1660. There he had but a short ministry of three years, for in 1663, when Middleton's Act came into force, he was ejected.

On that last sad Sunday Peden preached to his sorrowful people all day until the darkness fell. Even then, they clung to him and wept. Being himself greatly moved, he at last left the pulpit, closed the door, rapped on it three times with his Bible, and said three times over: "I arrest thee in my Master's name, that none ever enter thee but such as comes in at the door as I did."

The pulpit, thus fenced, remained unoccupied for thirty years, until in 1693, William Kyle was ordained to take up the prophet's mantle.

Then began for Alexander Peden those twenty-three years of wandering in the deserts of Scotland, and that dwelling in dens and caves of the earth, such as never was the like for endurance and strange happenings. A man of great refine-

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ment, he might have consorted with gentlemen of his own kind. The Boswells of Auchinleck were his friends. But from now on until he was a prematurely old man at sixty, he gave himself, heart and soul, to the outed folk of God, making himself homeless for the sake of his Master who Himself had nowhere to lay his head.

From the first, he was the uncanny prophet of coming events.

He joined that zealous handful which was afterwards broken at Rullion Green on 28th November 1666. But having qualms, Peden did not go with them all the way, turning aside from them when they crossed the Clyde. On the night of the defeat at Pentland he was sixty miles away in the house of a friend in Carrick. But next morning he called his host to him and said :

“I have sad news to tell you. Our friends that were together in arms . . . are now broken, killed, taken and fled every man. . . . There is a great part prisoners in Edinburgh.”

Forty-eight hours afterwards these words were confirmed.

One June day, Peden and John Wilson of Lanark came to the house of a man on Douglas Water. Peden, as he often did, went into the

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fields for the night, and when John Wilson went out the next morning to bring him in to breakfast, Peden said :

“No, no, I will eat no more bread in this place ; our landlord is an unhappy man ; the devil will get him shortly ; for he will hang himself.”

And so it fell out.

One night, while at family worship in the house of a Mr Vernon in Ireland, Peden suddenly halted and listened.

“What’s this I hear ? ” said he.

Then he clapped his hands.

“I hear a dead shot at the throne of Britain. Let him go. . . . We’re well quit of him.”

At the very same hour Charles II. died.

A weird prophet of the Lord as well as a gangrel preacher was Alexander Peden.

But his faith in the unseen Presence was only matched by his own resourcefulness. There were occasions when he baffled his enemies by sheer audacity.

One night he went to a desert place and “darned himself into a mosshag.” The next morning when James Nisbet, an Ayrshire ploughman, was walking behind the harrows, a troop of

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horsemen suddenly appeared, and the ploughman took to his heels. The dragoons followed him, but had to desist when they came to the moss-hags. They then fired on him, and "he having knots upon his hair on each side of his head" a bullet took away one of the knots. The man ran on and came upon Peden in the moss.

"Oh Jamie," said he, with a laugh, "I am glad your head is safe, for I knew it would be in danger."

And with that, he calmly took out his knife, and cut off the other knot of hair.

See that party of horsemen being guided down the braeface to a ford in the Water of Titt, near Ballantrae. They are after Peden and have lost their way. They come on two men riding. One of the riders offers his assistance and points out the ford. The soldiers pass over one by one, and on the other side of the stream the captain turns round to wave his thanks to the courteous horseman. The horseman is Peden himself!

"Why did you go with them?" said the laird of Glor-over, who had been riding with Peden; "you might have sent the lad with them."

"No, no, it was more safe for me," said Peden, "for they might have asked questions

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at the lad, and he might have fainted and discovered us. For myself, I knew they would be like Egyptian dogs, they would not move a tongue against me, for my hour of falling into their hands, and the day of trial is not yet come, that is abiding me."

Again the dragoons are after him, and this time Peden is surely caught ! They have forced him in the month of March to ride straight for a water so swollen with the melting snows that no man or horse can live in it. But, right into the middle of this icy spate he plunges without hesitating, and by a miracle both horse and rider win through.

"Lads," he cries from the other bank, "follow me not, for I assure you ye want my boat, and so will certainly drown."

And ere he galloped away he flung this weird homily at them :

"Consider where your landing will be. Ye are fighting for hell, and running post to it."

Needless to say, none dared follow him.

Or see him on the open moor with one or two of his outed friends. They are sitting in a mosshag discussing the Eternities, when Peden, who has gleg ears, starts at a sound. He looks

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about him. Yonder is a troop of horse and foot soldiers casting a cordon round them.

The Covenanters took to their heels and gained the shelter of a little knoll. Then Peden said quietly :

“ Let us pray here.”

With death almost touching him, he prayed :

“ Twine them about the hill, Lord, and cast the lap o’ Thy cloak o’er old Sandy and thir poor things, and save us this one time.”

And the mist came down in silence and shrouded them so securely that the horsemen were confounded in the mossy bogs.

The braveries of this good man, with his heather prayers, put our latter-day cautions of faith to shame. With him, a belief in the presence of the Unseen was the strongest passion of his soul. His speech, also, whether it was addressed to God in prayer or to the hill folk in preaching, was of the quaintest.

More than once he fled to Ireland, and often from the Antrim coast he would take a long look through his prospect glass to the bloodstained land of home.

Hear him soliloquising in his despondency :

“ I have lost my prospect wherewith I was

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wont to look o'er to the bloody land. . . . The devil and I puddles and rides time about upon other ; but if I were uppermost again I shall ride hard and spurgaw well : I've been praying for some time for a swift passage over to the sinful land . . . but now Alexander Gordon is away with my prayer wind. . . . Lord, give us a loofful of wind."

Or this :

" My Master is the rider and I am the horse : I never love to ride but when I find the spurs."

" I defy the world to steal a lamb out of Christ's flock unmissed."

" It is honourable to be a footman in Christ's company, and run at Christ's foot from morning to evening."

Sometimes the people would press him to preach, but he would positively refuse.

" Let the people go to their prayers," said he ; " for me—I neither can nor will preach any this day ; for our friends are fallen . . . and they are haggig and hashing them down ; and their blood is running like water."

But he was caught at last, one June day of the year 1673, by Major Cockburn, in the house

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of Hugh Ferguson of Knockdow in Carrick. Peden was then taken to Edinburgh along with Ferguson. He was sentenced to be imprisoned on the Bass, and he was kept in that unco place for four years.

These four years of close confinement must have been a severe trial to this lover of the open moors. But even on the Bass he lost neither heart nor hope. In a letter which he wrote to Patrick Simpson from the Bass, he says :

“ We are close shut up in our chambers : not permitted to converse, diet, worship together ; but conducted out by two at once in the day, to breathe in the open air ; envying, with reverence, the birds their freedom, provoking and calling on us to bless Him for the most common mercies. Again we are close shut up, day and night, to hear only the sighs and groans of our fellow prisoners.”

From the Bass he was taken to the Tolbooth prison in Edinburgh, where he spent other fifteen months, until he was sentenced to be banished. But none save the hands of God could hold Alexander Peden. With other sixty-eight prisoners he was put on board the *St Michael of Scarborough* at Leith under Captain Edward

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Johnston. All the prisoners were consigned to Ralph Williamson in London for transportation to the Virginian plantations. And still Peden was undaunted. He declared calmly that the ship was not yet built that would take him to Virginia.

“You need not fear,” said he to his fellow-passengers, “there will neither thumbikin nor bootikin come here; lift up your hearts and heads, for the day of your redemption draweth near; if we were once in London, we will all be set at liberty.”

The prophecy actually came true. For at Gravesend, Williamson did not appear, and the skipper of the convict ship, expecting a gang of thieves, would not take these holy men of the Covenant off Johnston’s hand. So he set them all free, and Peden with his friends walked back to Scotland.

The age in which Alexander Peden lived was a superstitious one. If a young woman strangled her own child she was burned. Women were also burned on the mere suspicion of being witches. When, for instance, Peden was preaching at Douglas Town-head in 1682, “he gave

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some stedfast, frowning looks to a woman, as his ordinary was upon unhappy persons, and said to Gavin Wilson :

“ ‘ Cause your servants put out that woman with the *pirnie*¹ plaid ; I will not begin while she is here ; for she is a witch.’ ”

On another occasion, while he was preaching, he laid his hands on an old woman's head and said :

“ Thou witch wife, thou witch wife, thou witch wife, I offer Christ to thee. Quit the devil's service ; thou hast a bad master ; thou will never make thy plack a babee of him ; and if thou will break off and renounce the devil's service, I promise thee, in my Master's name, that He will give thee salvation.”

Little wonder if Peden's mystical powers were often exaggerated. Doubtless, like the best of men, he was not untouched by the superstitions of his time. This man was indeed a friend of God ; but very often his forecasts were simply the outcome of a very keen observation and a ready wit that made him able to draw shrewd inferences from circumstances which were altogether insignificant to ordinary people. And yet—when

¹ *Pirnie* = variegated woollen.

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all is said, there was something almost unearthly about the second sight of this man with the far-away eye and the far-ben soul.

He had the simplest and most mystical conception of the Church of Christ.

“Where is the Church of God in Scotland at this day”? he cried in a sermon. “It is not amongst the great clergy. I will tell you where the Church is. It is wherever a praying young man or young woman is at a dykeside in Scotland. That’s where the Church is.”

He had the look of a man who is always communing with God.

As Sergeant Nisbet said :

“I observed that every time he spoke, whether conversing, reading, praying, or preaching, between every sentence he paused a little, as if he had been hearkening what the Lord would say to him, or listening to some secret whisper. And sometimes he would start as if he had seen some surprising sight.”

But Peden was no mere prophet of doom. He was an inveterate hoper. Did he not once say to John Clerk of Muirbrook in Carrick, laying “his heavy hand” on him :

“There shall be dark days such as the poor

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Church of Scotland never saw the like. . . . Yet, John, the Church shall arise from her grave ; and at the crack of her winding-sheet, as many as had a hand in her burial shall be distracted with fear. Then there shall be brave days for the Church, and she shall come forth with a bonny bairn-time at her back."

When nearing the end of life, he was grieved with the dissensions and secessions that arose in the ranks of the hill folk. The slightest sign of cowardice in a preacher or in an adherent of Christ was not likely to be forgiven by this man of God who himself was a stranger to fear.

One of these suspects was a young preacher called James Renwick or Rennie. This lad visited Peden in his cave, and it is good to remember the scene. Death was not far away from old Sandy, as he lay in his earthen hidie-hole at Ten-shillingside in the parish of Auchinleck. The guileless Renwick had come at his call, and Peden confessed his regret at having ever doubted his loyalty. The weary old man was "lying in very low circumstances, overgrown with hair, and few to care for him, as he never took much care of his body ; seldom he unclothed himself these years, or went to bed."

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He raised himself on his rough couch and said :

“ Sir, are ye the Mr James Renwick that there is so much noise about ? ”

“ Father, my name is James Renwick, but I have given the world no ground to make any noise about me.”

“ Well, sir, turn about your back.”

This Renwick did.

“ I think,” said Peden, “ your legs too small and your shoulders too narrow to take on the whole Church of Scotland upon your back. Sit down, sir, and give me an account of your conversion.”

Which James Renwick did.

“ Ye have answered me to my soul’s satisfaction. . . . But, sir, ere you go, you must pray for me, for I am old and going to leave the world.”

And so it fell out that Alexander Peden, despite his twenty-three years’ wandering on the moors, died as other men die. He was for creeping home to his bed in the old house of Auchincloich, but the soldiers scented him out, so this man who had lived in the deserts died in a cave.

“ Carry me to Ayrsmoss,” said he at the hinder end, “ and bury me beside Ritchie, that I

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may have quiet in my grave, for I have had little in my life.”

He died on a January day of the year 1686, worn out at sixty by his extraordinary privations. Let one of his last words be a fitting commentary on his life :

“ God has been both good and kind to poor old Sandy through a long tract of time.”

Forty days after his burial in Auchinleck Churchyard, the soldiers rifled his grave, and carried the body two miles to Cumnock, where they would have hanged it in chains on the gallows, had they not been prevented by the Countess of Dumfries and Dame Boswell. So they buried it at the gibbet foot, and to-day that spot has become the hallowed God's Acre where in the midst of his own kith and kin the prophet of the Lord sleeps until the Resurrection Day.

CHAPTER XXIV

JAMES RENWICK, THE LAST MARTYR

JAMES RENWICK is always called the last martyr of the Covenant, for he was the last of that great company of faithful men and women who suffered on the scaffold for Christ. So long as youth is youth and the life of faith is a great adventure of the soul, this lad with the frail body and the burning heart will stand before the generations as a Mr Valiant-for-Truth.

James Renwick, Rannie, or Rennie, was born of humble parents in a cottage near the village of Moniaive on 15th February 1662. His father, Andrew Renwick, was a weaver ; and his mother, Elizabeth Corson, had suffered many domestic sorrows. She had lost all her children. Then James came, and she dedicated him to the service of God. It is related that when the child was only two years old she saw him “aiming at prayer, even in the cradle and

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about it." At six, he was reading his own Bible.

We may think it marvellous to-day that some of these children seem to have had a passion for Christ from the beginning. But children are very largely what their homes make them, and a boy like James Renwick was reared in a daily atmosphere of Covenanting. He would remember the heroes of Rullion Green and Bothwell Brig. To be born in Moniaive was to drink in the traditions of the hill folks like mother's milk. So this boy with the ecstatic soul was yet to raise the banner of Richard Cameron which had fallen at Ayrsmoss.

How it was done, only frugal Scots parents can tell ; but he was sent to Edinburgh College and took his degree there in 1681. While still a student, he stood among the crowd on a July day of that same year and saw blest Donald Cargill die at the Mercat Cross. There and then, young Renwick had a strange premonition of an early death, and resolved that he would carry on Cargill's work. He had his own days of doubts and darkness, but he struggled bravely through these mental clouds to a clearer light.

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Then came another awesome sight for one so young and frail and fervent.

At the Gallowlee, which stood near Shrub-hill on Leith Walk, betwixt the city and the sea, James Renwick saw the hangman “hash and hag off” the heads of five Covenanters—Robert Garnock, Patrick Forman, David Farrie, James Stuart and Alexander Russell. Their bodies were all buried at the gallows foot, but their heads, along with Patrick Forman’s right hand, were fixed upon five spikes at the Pleasaunce Port. A little band of friends, one of them young Renwick, contrived to lift the bodies and bury them in Greyfriars’ Kirkyard. Then they stole, under darkness, to the Pleasaunce Port that they might remove the five heads; but a woman, holding a candle to let some people see the streets, prevented them. Before dawn came, however, they took down the five heads and the hand, and came with them to Lauriston Yards. There, Alexander Tweedie, who was a gardener, buried them in his yard. Tweedie always said afterwards that there was a treasure buried in his garden, and he planted there a white rose bush and a red one. The skulls lay undisturbed for forty-five years. When found, they were re-

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interred with great reverence near the Martyrs' Tomb in Greyfriars' Kirkyard on the 19th day of October 1726.

We can well understand what all this meant to the soul of a sensitive student like James Renwick. It was "the first publick action that his hand was at." After that, he became a member of the Secret Societies for Covenanted Prayer. He was present at one of the conventions at Logan House, near Lanark, on 15th December 1681 when he assented to the Lanark Declaration. He was even one of the party that broke Lanark Cross with hammers in the following January. In May he watched the execution of Robert Gray for calling the King a tyrant. Little wonder that young Renwick from that time had a vision of his own coming martyrdom.

He was then sent over to Holland and became a student at Groningen. He was ordained there on 10th May 1683. But his heart yearned to be back in Scotland, as his letters testify : " O, mind sweet Scotland ! . . . I am not a little sorrowful at the very heart that I am not in Scotland, for nothing that ever I was trysted with was such an exercise to me as my being detained out of it is.

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. . . I think, if the Lord could be tied to any place, it is to the moors and mosses of Scotland."

All this from a lad of twenty-one !

These, however, were dangerous days. So when James Renwick did return in August 1683, he travelled to Dublin as "James Bruce." Then he crossed over to Edinburgh.

He made his first appearance at Darmead Moor, a bleak upland near Cambusnethan in Lanarkshire. Here, at a general meeting of the Societies, Renwick handed in his testimony and was called to be a minister to the Remnant. Here also at Darmead, he preached his first sermon on Cargill's last theme, "Come, my people, enter into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee ; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."

Thus did the young preacher of twenty-one begin his vagabond ministry. He had no church but the open moors. His ministry was to last a little over four years. He was no fanatical ecclesiastic, but a man new come to his majority with the zeal of Christ in his soul, and the shadow of death always falling over him. Soon did he learn that danger holds in it no refuge. Every time he preached, a fast horse, saddled and

JAMES RENWICK

bridled, stood by him, that he might fly across the moors on the moment.

And yet, many distrusted him, and suspected him of false doctrine. He was called a spy and a Jesuit. His eloquence, nevertheless, drew crowds to the moors. He baptized hundreds of children in the fields. His fame spread as far as London. A poetic, religious genius, with a delicate body, he wrote letters which were both elegant and tender in their expressions. But night and day the Shadow was always there. "I am daily looking out, either to be presently killed . . . or else dragged into a prison or scaffold."

He went through fire and water for his Master, consumed with a holy zeal that burned up his frail physical reserves. "My body was never so frail. Excessive travel, night wanderings, unreasonable sleep and diet, and frequent preachings in all seasons of weather, especially in the night, have so debilitated me that I am often incapable for any work. Sometimes I fall into fits of swooning and fainting. . . . I mention not this through any anxiety, quarrelling, or discontent, but to show you my condition in this respect. I may say that, under all my frail-

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ties and distempers, I find great peace and sweetness in reflecting upon the occasion thereof: it is a part of my glory and joy to bear such infirmities, contracted through my poor and small labour in my Master's vineyard."

Here surely was a young saint of whom we might say the zeal of God's House had eaten him up. And yet God's House to him was a dripping moor, or a hollow in the hills.

Despite his zeal, he was ever anxious to refrain from violence. When Peirson, the incumbent of Carsphairn, was shot by Black MacMichael, Renwick and the Societies disapproved of the act, and excommunicated those who took part in it.

But when it came to matters of soul and conscience, Renwick knew no fear. He drew up a Declaration and fixed it to the doors of the parish churches and the market crosses—a declaration which his enemies called "this most barbarous and hellish proclamation." For owning it, four men were hanged at the Gallowlee.

On the 28th of May 1685, a Covenanters' Parliament was held on Blackgannoch Moss, between Muirkirk and Sanquhar. It was a veritable synod of defiants. There Renwick pre-

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sided over two hundred exasperated men. After deliberation, they determined upon two things. First, "not at all to join with sectarians, malignants, nor any other, their confederates"; and second, "the protestation . . . against proclaiming James, Duke of York, King . . . was concluded and agreed upon and ordained to be published the same day at the burgh of Sanquhar."

Thereafter these men marched down through the hills from Blackgannoch to Sanquhar Cross. They sang a Psalm, and Renwick prayed. The Protestation was fixed to the Cross, and they returned to the moors once more.

This *Protestation* was a long document. It renounced the King, calling him a murderer, an idolater, a papist, and an enemy of religion. Those who approved of it were determined to abide by a pure, Covenanted religion.

It is not surprising that Claverhouse was soon on their heels. But James Renwick withdrew for a time to the North of England, where he preached in the fields to all who came to hear the Word.

In the spring of the following year the Covenanters again met at Blackgannoch and drew up a Vindication of Renwick and the Remnant.

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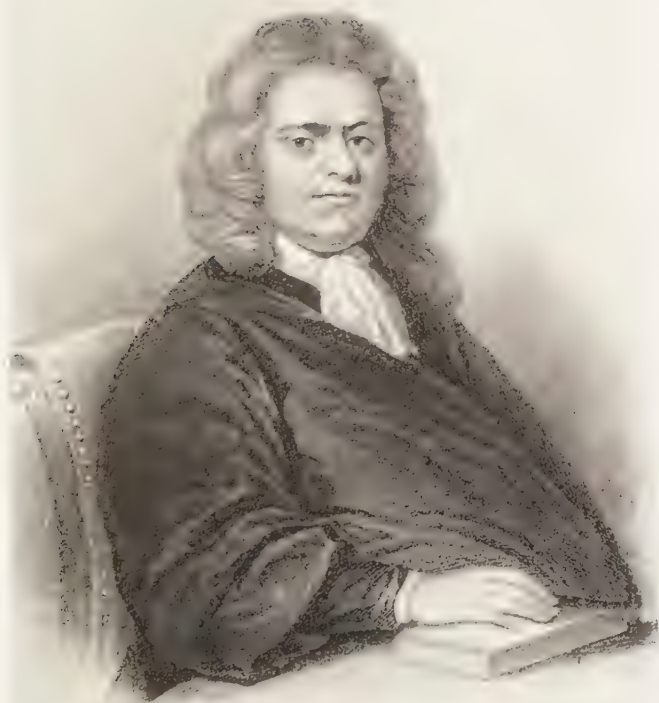
This *Informatory Vindication* was printed and circulated in Holland, that Renwick might be justified before his traducers.

Meantime the young zealot went on preaching up and down the country despite all danger. He even ventured to hold a conventicle on the Braid Hills, near Edinburgh. Further, as if venturing right into the lions' den, he went to stay in the house of John Luckup on the Castle Hill. John Luckup himself was a suspect, and his house was a notorious howff for all who had Covenanting sympathies.

Wherever James Renwick stayed, he was sure to engage in prayer. When praying one day in this house, his voice was recognised. On the following morning a party of men came to arrest him. But Renwick, with pistol in hand, cleared a way for himself and ran down the Castle Wynd to the Cowgate. There, a tulzie took place on the street, a blow staggered him, and he was soon in the hands of the Town guard.

When brought before Captain Patrick Graham, that soldier was astonished beyond measure.

"What!" he exclaimed, "Is this boy that Mr Renwick whom the nation has been so much troubled with?"



PRINCIPAL WILLIAM CARSTAR

JAMES RENWICK

For Renwick was only twenty-six years of age.

It must be admitted that the authorities would have welcomed a way out of another execution at this stage. But the Privy Council were forced to condemn James Renwick on three distinct charges—he would on no account acknowledge the King's authority : he refused to pay the *Cess* : and he instructed his followers to come armed to all field preachings. Renwick himself admitted that he was guilty according to law on these three counts. But he had long ago counted the cost.

The only fear he had was—a fear of being tortured. He was highly strung. His poor frail body tingled with sensibility. He was apprehensive that he might not be able to stand the torture of the boot or the thumbscrews. But his fears were futile. The very day before he died he said : “ I have found Christ's cross sweet and lovely, for I have had many joyful hours and not a fearful thought since I came hither.”

To his mother he said : “ My death will do more good than my life for many years has done.”

On the 17th of February 1688, James Renwick was martyred at the age of twenty-six. “ I am ready,” he said quietly, when the drums began to roll. He sang the 103rd Psalm, prayed, and gave

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his testimony. The drums rolled on till all was over. So died this young martyr who refused to part with an atom of the truth as he knew it. He was himself the best illustration of what he called "the incommunicable prerogative of Jehovah."

He was the last martyr of the Covenant, if we think only of those who died on the scaffold or were drowned in the sea after trial.

But, in the month of June following his death, a boy called George Wood was shot dead on Tinkhorn Hill, near Sorn, in Ayrshire. It is related that a trooper, John Reid, who was notorious for his cruelty, came upon young Wood at night and killed him outright, without asking him a single question. George Wood was only sixteen years of age. In Sorn churchyard the original tombstone has on it these words :

HERE LIES GORG
WOOD WHO WAS SHOT
AT TINKHORN HILL BY BL
OODY JOHN REID TRUPER
FOR HIS ADHERENCE TO
THE WORD OF GOD AND
THE COVENANTED WORK
OF REFORMATION 1688

JAMES RENWICK

This boy was probably the very last who suffered death for the Covenant in all these twenty-eight years of persecution.

James Renwick died in February 1688. Two days before Christmas, the King had left England, the Revolution had come, and the long travail of the Covenanters was at an end.

In any great war the last death must always be tragic. But someone must be the last to die in a fight for freedom. So it was with James Renwick on the scaffold. He himself knew that the weary night of sorrow was nearly over, and that the dawn of a happier day was at hand.

“ So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.”

CHAPTER XXV

WILLIAM CARSTARES, THE AMBASSADOR OF THE KIRK ESTABLISHED

THE Revolution in Scotland was finally brought about by the King's stubborn determination to set up Roman Catholicism in a Protestant country. Edinburgh was gradually being flooded with Catholic converts. The Privy Council was packed with Catholics. The King's yacht arrived at Leith from London "with the Popish altar, vestments, images, priests, and other dependers for the Popish Chapel in the Abbey." A Catholic printing-press was set up in Holyrood, and James Watson was given special privileges over the Protestant printers, the Privy Council insisting that while these others "should declare on oath what books they kept and sold. . . . James Watson the Popish printer is excepted from this Act." The Keeper of Holyrood Palace was ordered to hand over the Chancellor's House to

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the "Society of Jesuits, to be made use of by them as a college for their own use." This last act roused the citizens of Edinburgh, who refused to desert the "Tounis Colledge" for a Jesuit College at Holyrood.

Then on 30th June 1688 an heir to the throne was born, and both Presbyterians and Episcopalians were united by a common fear that the Catholic policy of James II. and VII. would be continued. Scotland at once began to look for a suitable deliverer, and just then the first rumours were heard of the enterprise of William of Orange. On the 10th October, William actually issued an address to the people of Scotland, offering himself as their deliverer from all the tyrannies of their present King. The Presbyterians, to a man, welcomed the proposal. As, however, William was not the champion of any particular form of religion, but came from Holland, where there were no bishops, and where the Presbyterian exiles had always made their home, the Scots Episcopalians were in some dilemma. But when it came to a definite choice between a Catholic tyranny under James or a Protestant deliverance under William, there was no choice.

William, as a Protestant sovereign, had un-

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rivalled claims. He was the son of a British princess and the nephew of the King, while his wife, Princess Mary, was the Protestant heiress to the throne. So on the 18th of December 1688, William took possession of Whitehall, and two days before Christmas, James left England for ever.

Events followed very quickly after that in Scotland. Holyrood was swept clear of everything that savoured of an idolatrous service. The curates were turned out of their churches and manses at Christmas time, two hundred families thus suffering inevitable hardship in the winter weather. There was a rush of all ranks to London. William agreed to call a meeting of the Scots Estates. A Convention followed on 14th March 1689, and in April a formal "Declaration" was made regarding the vacant throne.

This *Declaration* consisted of two parts—a Claim of Right; and the distinct offer of the crown to William and Mary. The Claim of Right declared that the constitutional power to dethrone a ruler who violated the laws of his own kingdom lay with the Estates. It was then clearly shown that James had broken the constitution, and fifteen cases were cited. The

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King's chief offence was, that he had arrogated to himself the regal power without taking the Coronation Oath. Thus he had "forefaulted" the crown which was now offered to William and Mary.

So Scotland, with the aid of England, cast out her own ancient line of Stuart kings, and the victory of the Covenant was complete.

Through all these momentous months the figure of one man—William Carstares—stands out as the wise counsellor, the royal chaplain, and the Scots secretary of King William. Carstares doubtless enjoyed to the full the comfortable aftermath of the Revolution Settlement when the Church of Scotland was securely established. But he had also lived through the dark years of persecution which led up to the Revolution Settlement, and his twisted fingers gave ample evidence of torture by the thumbscrews.

He came of a goodly Fife family—the Carstares of New Grange. His father, John Carstares, was the outed minister of Cathcart; and his mother once wrote this noble word of love to her husband when he was skulking from one hiding-place to another: "My dear, I had reason

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always to bless the Lord that I knew you : and this day I desire to bless Him more than ever . . . that I have a husband wandering and suffering for the truth.”

Born in 1649, a stormy year for the Kirk, William Carstares was reared in the austere atmosphere of the Covenant. He took his degree at Edinburgh, and determined to follow his father into the Church. But it was judged safer to send him to Holland for the completion of his education. So he went to Utrecht.

In Holland the most vital event of his life was his meeting with William of Orange. The Prince was greatly drawn to the young Scots Presbyterian, and after their first introduction, Carstares was much with the Prince, giving him first-hand knowledge about the state of affairs in Scotland.

Very soon the young Scotsman got mixed up in the politics and diplomacies of that critical time. He was constantly employed on dangerous journeys between the exiled Scots in Holland and the distressed Scots at home. On one occasion, when he was carrying in his wallet very important letters, the ship on which he sailed was captured. Carstares himself managed

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to escape, but when the letters were appropriated it was found that they were written in mysterious white ink. Henceforth, Carstares was a marked man.

Like a stormy petrel, he travelled between Holland and Scotland. He was, at last, arrested and placed in the Tower of London. From the Tower he was transferred to the Tolbooth in Edinburgh. From the Tolbooth he was next transferred to the Castle. There he was kept in prison from 1675 to 1679. But whenever he was released, he began his plottings and diplomacies once more. His father, John Carstares, was greatly distressed, and said to a friend :

“ I have a son called Mr. William, and a good-son Mr. William Dunlop. They will be aye plotting and plodding till they plod the heads off themselves.”

William Carstares was certainly a fearless and able ambassador. We find him in many places—Ireland, Portpatrick, Edinburgh, London, Cornwall, Utrecht, Cleve, Leyden. In the midst of danger he found time to marry Elizabeth Kekewich, of Trehawk, in Cornwall, and the honeymoon was spent at Utrecht. But it did not last long, for he was soon deep in the Ryehouse Plot

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in 1683, and thereafter a yacht sailed from London to Leith with several distinguished prisoners on board, among whom were Baillie of Jerviswood and William Carstares.

We cannot follow all his movements. But this time torture was to be added to his confinement. In prison they could not get him to reveal anything of what he knew. So he was sent for, and in the old Privy Council Chamber of the Parliament House at Edinburgh, William Carstares went through the direst hour of his life.

One of the bailies of Edinburgh and the executioner were ordered to superintend the operation. The King's smith, with a new pair of very powerful thumbikins, was present. The screws were worked. The sweat of his agony poured down his brow and cheeks. The Duke of Hamilton rose in disgust and left the room. He was followed by the Duke of Queensberry, who said to the Chancellor: "I see he will rather die than confess."

Perth replied by ordering the executioner to give the screw another turn.

"The bones are squeezed to pieces!" exclaimed Carstares.

"If you continue obstinate," roared the

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Chancellor, "I hope to see every bone of your body squeezed to pieces."

Dalyell of Binns then rose, and coming close to Carstares, threatened to roast him alive if he would not speak.

But Carstares would not and did not speak.

Then an order was given for the Boot. His thumbs were still in the thumbikins when Carstares was forced to put his leg into the iron boot. The wedges were inserted between the case and the limb. But on this occasion the new-fangled hangman did not know how to adjust the wedges.

So, taking off the boot, he returned to the thumbikins.

Again Carstares kept silent, until he almost swooned away. The torture lasted "for near an hour and a half," according to Carstares, or "an hour" according to the minute of the Privy Council, and when the hangman was ordered to undo the thumbscrews, he found them so tight that he had to fetch tools to reverse the screw. Then the poor mangled thumbs were released.

Years after, when the Revolution had been accomplished, these very thumbscrews were pre-

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sented to William Carstares by a more merciful Privy Council, as a gruesome memorial of his suffering. Once, when showing them to the King, he put them on the royal thumbs and gave the screws a gentle turn.

“Harder,” said the King.

Carstares gave them another turn.

“Again!”

This time a sharper turn was given.

“Stop, Doctor, stop!” cried William of Orange, “another turn would make me confess anything.”

When the call came to William to cross the narrow seas and sit on the throne of Britain, Carstares, as his Royal chaplain, went with him. Whenever the troops landed on the shores of England, the chaplain suggested to the Prince of Orange that they should all praise God. So there the troops lined up and sang the 118th Psalm, after which William Carstares prayed. Here, surely, was the highest stand in life for any man, to offer thanks to God, by the side of an earthly king, with the clean Channel winds blowing about the army of deliverance like a benediction.

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But there was a great deal of coquetting between the new King and the bishops in Scotland before the complete victory of the Covenant was gained, and the Kirk in Scotland securely established. At this difficult time Carstares was invaluable as an adviser of the King.

Let one instance suffice to explain the whole ecclesiastical situation.

In 1694, on the ill advice of Lord Stair and Lord Tarbat, the King sent an order to Scotland that all the ministers of religion must sign the *Oath of Allegiance* before they could take their seats in the Assembly. Here was something very like the old hateful interference of the King in the free Assembly of the Kirk. Consternation immediately followed. The Assembly was delayed. The Commissioner sent a flying message to William at Kensington, asking for an explanation by return.

Carstares happened to be absent from the Court at the time. But a memorial had also been sent to him from the ministers, asking him to see that no harm came to the Kirk. Before Carstares could get back to Court, Stair and Tarbat persuaded the King to renew the hateful instruction

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to administer the *Oath of Allegiance*. But Carstares returned just in time to intercept the fatal dispatch. He made the King's messenger deliver it up to him, and walked straight to the King's bedchamber.

"The King is asleep, sir," said the man in waiting.

"I know that, but I must see him at all costs."

And William Carstares walked boldly up to the bedside, knelt down, and awakened the King.

"What is the matter?" exclaimed King William, when he saw his old friend in the attitude of a suppliant at that unusual hour.

"I have come to beg that you will spare my life."

"Impossible! Have you committed some deadly crime?"

Carstares in answer held up the intercepted dispatch.

"What! Have you countermanded my orders?"

"I have."

Then followed a momentous interview.

But when the King heard the explanation of

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this consummate diplomatist, who was called the "Cardinal" by the Jacobites and ill-affected lords, but who could risk his all for the sake of his Country and his Kirk, he saw the unwisdom of the dispatch, and threw the papers in the fire.

Thus the Kirk was saved from further catastrophe.

We need not follow William Carstares through all the honours of his later career. He became the minister of Greyfriars and afterwards of the ancient cathedral kirk of St. Giles. He was elected Moderator of the Assembly four times. For twelve years he was Principal of Edinburgh University. Added to all his wisdom, statesmanship, and ecclesiastical diplomacies, it must never be forgotten that he had a kind heart. When he was buried, two men in shabby black clothes attended his funeral and were seen to turn away from the grave with tears in their eyes. They were two Episcopal curates, whose families the great Presbyter had supported during the time of their distress.

The General Assembly met on the 16th of October 1690, for the first time since Cromwell's

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dragoons had broken up its debates in 1653. Hugh Kennedy, an old protestor, was chosen Moderator, and about one hundred and eighty members, clerical and lay, attended. Sixty of the older ministers had belonged to the old protesting party, and the younger ministers had either skulked among the hills of Scotland or been licensed to preach in Holland among the exiles. All ministers who subscribed to the Confession of Faith and promised to be loyal to the Presbyterian form of Church government were to be allowed to remain in the Church.

What happy reunions took place in that Assembly !

There was saintly Thomas Hog of Kiltearn, who had served his term on the Bass, and had his grave dug on the threshold of his highland church with this inscription on the slab : “ This stone shall bear witness against the parishioners of Kiltearn if they bring ane ungodly minister in here.”

There were William Veitch and Gilbert Elliot, the latter afterwards known as Lord Minto, the judge. Elliot had pleaded for Veitch’s life and secured his acquittal, and now they met again in the Assembly. What game they made over the



COVENANTERS' MONUMENT IN GREYFRIARS CHURCHYARD

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hard, sad days ! Turning to Veitch, Gilbert Elliot said with a laugh :

“ Ah, Willie ! Willie ! had it no’ been for me, the pyots had been pyking your pate on the Netherbow ! ”

“ Ah, Gibbie ! Gibbie ! ” replied the pawkie minister, “ had it no’ been for me you would ha’ been writing papers yet for a plack the page ! ”

There was Henry Erskine, the father of two famous sons, Ebenezer and Ralph. He was a man full of the grace of God and of common sense. Once, during the persecution, when the last bite had been consumed in the poverty-stricken house at Dryburgh, and the hungry children awoke in the night crying for bread, the father took his viol and played sweet melodies to the starving children, and so comforted both them and their mother. Not long after he had done this, a man on horseback stopped at the door and left a bagful of food, riding off again without a word.

Such were some of the brave and godly men who met in the first General Assembly of the settled Church of Scotland within St Giles in the year 1690. In peace they forgathered, in peace

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they deliberated and prayed, and in peace they separated to go to their homes. They had all faced death in the old dire days. Now they met without fear to praise God with melody in their hearts.

EPILOGUE

And so the tale is told.

But, of its manner of telling some may say that here is one who has marshalled his facts according to his own partiality. Doubtless, the ideal historian is the man of a perfectly unbiased mind, who holds in check his impulses lest they stray to this side or to that. But, it is impossible for some of us to love without a leaning. It may be pardoned, therefore, to a Scots Presbyterian if he still feels his heart going out to those men of the mosshags, and if his eyes still grow dim when he thinks of Ritchie and poor old Sandy—those brave sons of strife.

We live in very different days—days of luxury such as they never knew, and days of freedom when it is easy to rap out criticisms on men who lived in the arduous long ago. But, perhaps we do not even yet realise how much superstition was mixed with the religion of the Scots people after the Reformation. Bulls were

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offered in sacrifice within the bounds of the Presbytery of Lochcarron, and the transgressors were dealt with by their fellow Presbyters, as recorded in the Minutes of 1656 and 1678. Women were burned as witches—nine on Leith Links in 1644, seven at Paisley in 1697, and an old woman at Dornoch as late as 1722, before the Statutes against witchcraft were repealed in 1736. Even in 1743 we find the Associate Presbytery of the Seceders in Edinburgh lamenting “the penal statutes against witches having been repealed by Parliament, contrary to the express will of God.” For a long time Roman Catholic priests were forbidden to perform their religious rites in public, as the Priest’s Hidie Hole in many an old Scots castle proves to-day. Nor can we read without a twinge of remorse how some of the Episcopal ministers with their wives and children were “rabbed out” of their churches and manses by bands of raiders and wild women, who broke down doors, dispoiled households, cudgelled the poor curate, and turned his wife and children out into the snow. Indeed, for a long time after the Revolution an Episcopal minister was very chary about conducting the service of his Church in public.

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Whether, therefore, a man be a Roman Catholic, an Episcopalian or a Presbyterian to-day, he must be left at perfect liberty to read or write history from his own standpoint, and it is for each of us in fairness to give credit to the other for the particular angle from which he tells the story of his own Church. Only by looking at all the facts, from all the standpoints, will we some day get the complete tale told, and justice done to all. For, to deny the faults even of our heroes is to handicap ourselves when we come to tell their virtues.

In proof of this I will cite only one authority : “ The Minute Book kept by the War Committee of the Covenanters in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright in the years 1640 and 1641 ”—a most unique and revealing document.

In the spring of the year 1639, the War Committee of the Covenanters began to levy an army on the whole kingdom. Money was urgently required. A sum of two hundred thousand merks was borrowed. But, the means taken to raise the additional money must seem to many to-day to have been inconsistent with the liberty of the subject—the very cause for which the Covenanters were fighting. The times,

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however, were nothing short of desperate. And the Covenanters, like other people, were very human, as well as very zealous.

In the preface of this book we get the standpoint of an old Covenanter stated in his own words, when he was seventy-seven years of age :

“ Could I only record what I have suffered in myself, and seen suffered by others in the same cause, *that* record might prove a valuable heirloom to future generations. There is now a lull. The Laggs, the Dalrymple, the Lauderdales, the Claverses, the Sharpes, and many others that I could name, have ceased to afflict God’s heritage. Some of them have gone to their account, and all await it. It is not for me to judge them, nor shall I. They have caused the blood of the righteous to flow as if it had been worthless as ditch water. *That* is the witness against them—and it is enough. . . . Earth has done with them, however ; let us leave the settlement of the account to the Judge of us all. . . . I have wrestled in prayer, I have yearned in my soul, nay, I have fought and shed human blood with carnal weapons. What I have seen and enacted might make a boarded book ;—for many years of my long life were passed amid

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danger and distress. I have wandered over the moors and the mountains, darning in the caves, or cowering under the cliffs and craigs of my native home-land; blinded by the lightening; deafened by the thunder; battered by the rains; tossed about by the winds; and gulphed in a snow wreath; and only escaping from these perils to be hunted by the minions of our godless rulers. It is over, for a time at least. May it be for ever! and I am left at the age of three score and seventeen (a rare wonder) to think and speak of what is past."

Whether these words were ever spoken or not, there you have the language and the experience and the feelings of a man who could not be expected to live and think and act during the Killing Time as we live and think and act in the comfortable years of the twentieth century. A standpoint in any age springs from experience.

On the other hand, we have to admit that many a man during the Covenanting struggle must have resented this levy for money to maintain an army, especially if he did not quite see eye to eye with the more zealous leaders. Such a reluctant subscriber was called "A Cold Covenanter."

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Here is the actual thing described :

“ The quhilk day, the Committie foirsaid finds and declares ane cold covenanter to be suche ane persone quha does not his dewtie in everie thing committed to his charge, thankfullie and willinglie, without compulsion for the furtherance of the publict.”

And here is an example of “ ane cold covenanter ” taken from the Minutes :

“ It is represented to us be Johne Newall, that you have fyned him in fyve hundred merks for not subscriyveing of the generall band.” Thus wrote eight gentlemen in protest to Lord Kirkcudbright and the Committee of War.

To this protest, the War Committee minutes give an unmistakable answer :

“ The said Johne Newall was lang averse frae the subscriyving of the covenant of this kingdome, as did apeir be being ane of the last subscriyvers in the congregacione, albeit that he was bothe privatlie and publiclie delt with for that effect.” . . . “ Being baillie to the Erle of Galloway in that paroche, he never concurred in nothing that concernes the publict.” . . . “ Is knawn to be ane ordinar murmurer and complainer.” . . . “ to the bad example of uthers ;

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quhilk sume hes confessit since, that his bitter curseing of himself that he should never do it, prevaillit upon thame and was the onlie ground of thair refuissall.”

It will hardly be denied by anyone that John Newall had all the marks of a Cold Covenantanter. Such a man must have been one of the sorest problems the Covenanters had to deal with. Nor is it to be wondered at that some of his descendants to-day are staunch Episcopalians.

And yet! When all is said and done, we must strike the average in judging an age that was teeming with good men and bad. We must judge every cause by the great principles on which it is carried forward, not by its bad representatives. In looking back to-day we must surely admire any body of men who set themselves to serve Christ according to their lights; who measured their duty by the test of conscience alone; and who refused, even on pain of torture and death, to forego a single jot or tittle of their covenanted faith.

So, we end the tale, not on a note of argument, but on a note of gratitude for what those great souls did for us so long ago.

Let us sit down by the lonely grave on the

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face of a Pentland slope, and when the sun goes down let us look towards the dim blue ridge of the far-off Ayrshire hills which the dead Covenanter desired with all his heart to see again in the moment of his passing. Then, let us listen, in the silence, to a greater man than any of us, as he puts our thoughts into words which will never die :

“ Blows the wind to-day, and the sun and the rain are flying,
Blows the wind on the moors to-day and now,
Where above the graves of the martyrs the whaups are
crying,
My heart remembers how !

Grey recumbent tombs of the dead in desert places,
Standing stones on the vacant wine-red moor,
Hills of sheep, and the howes of the silent vanished races,
And winds, austere and pure.

Be it granted me to behold you again in dying,
Hills of home ! and to hear again the call :
Hear about the graves of the martyrs the peewees crying,
And hear no more at all.”

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